173 at a royal homestead, and was led by a nominee of the king, usually
[561] a prince or chief. Other royal homesteads, called 'heads', were in
charge of princes and were the foci of allegiance of groups of
chiefdoms within the kingdom.

173 Thus every man owed allegiance in several places. He had
631 obligations to his agnatic lineage, and in particular to that segment
of the lineage within the chiefdom to which he belonged. Local
[613] matters, questions arising over land and cattle, and quarrels
[627] between neighbours, were settled by discussion between agnates or
by reference to the lieutenant appointed by the chief to look after
the district. Every man was also a member of a division of his
chiefdom, and hunted wild beasts with his fellows in the division.
[621] He was a member of his chiefdom as against other chiefdoms, and
looked to his chief for assistance in his affairs, even as the chief
relied on the support of his people in his own struggles with other
[619] chiefs. In the nation, every man belonged to a regiment, fought and
danced alongside his regimental age-mates drawn from every chiefdom,
and was expected to support the prince who commanded the
[701] regiment. Finally he was a member of a 'head' and within his
regiment was grouped together with others from the same head.
A man might change his chiefdom, but his allegiance to regiment
and head were fixed.[5]

178 The Ngoni State was founded in the 1820's by men and women,
perhaps a thousand in number, who had grown up in a social
619 system of this kind. Certain parts of the system were dropped,
others were developed. In effect, the system was simplified and
adapted to the life of migrant brigandage which the Ngoni enjoyed
for some seventy years. The old alignment of agnatic lineages
[613] disappeared, for the great majority of Ngoni joined the system by
capture, not by birth. In its place a quasi-agnatic residential
[621] system was evolved, in which men and women bore allegiance not
to their own agnatic seniors but to their lord or captor. This
system was, however, tied in with an arrangement of royal homesteads
which in itself was a development of the division of polygynous
households into great, left- and right-hand 'houses'. There
were no chiefdoms within the nation, for the nation began, as it were,
as a *tabula rasa* without significant relics of earlier chiefly align-
[561] ments. The age-set system remained the basis of military organi-
[701] zation, but there were no royal or chiefly commanders appointed
over regiments and there were no regimental barracks. Instead the
178 bulk of the population lived in large villages which resembled the
621 former royal homesteads and military barracks but in which men

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[5] Based on Bryant, *Olden times*, and Gluckman, 'Kingdom of the Zulu'.

lived with their wives and children, and not all of which had royal 178 headmen. The system of 'heads' disappeared, at least in the Ngoni group with which we are most concerned, and within their regi- 621 ments men were grouped in terms of their place in the residential [701] system.

3. *Foundation of the State*

The Nguni chiefdoms of the seventeenth and early eighteenth 173 centuries were, according to all accounts, comparatively small. 643 There were many of them and they were unstable. After about 1775 the pattern of political alignment began to alter and larger states appeared. By 1810 three kingdoms, the Mthethwa, Ndandwe and Qwabe,[7] dominated the rest and in 1818 Zwide, king of the Ndandwe, whose territory was in what is now northern Zululand, killed the Mthethewa king. He then turned his attention to Shaka, an Mthethwa by political affiliation who had conquered his kinsmen the Qwabe and had become the effective leader of the Mthethwa kingdom. Unfortunately for Zwide, he was defeated in 1819 by Shaka and thereupon the Ndandwe kingdom broke up. Some segments became part of Shaka's expanding State, others [167] moved off to the north. About 1821[8] Zwangendaba, who had been for a time a sub-chief of Zwide, led a party of refugees north-eastwards into the region of Delagoa Bay. The route probably taken by Zwangendaba and his followers, and by other Ngoni groups, is shown in Map A. Near Delagoa Bay Zwangendaba found Soshangane, a classificatory brother of Zwide,[9] fighting with Nxaba, another minor chief, both of them refugees like Zwangendaba from the rising power of Shaka. All three parties raided the [721] indigenous Tsonga peoples and made captives fight alongside [727] their new masters.

Zwangendaba quarrelled with Soshangane and moved on 173 farther north. He took with him his new Tsonga adherents and 167 also some small groups of Swazi and related peoples who had fled independently from Shaka and who now placed themselves under

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[7] I do not claim any consistency in my spelling of indigenous names and other words. As far as possible I have endeavoured to follow Atkins, 'Spelling Nyanja'. However I have written the unaspirated post-alveolar affricative in its old form *ch* whenever the new form *c* might be confused with the radical dental click consonant represented by *c* in Zulu. [104]

[8] cf. Bryant, *Olden times*, p. 459. He is followed by Poole, *Native tribes*, pp. 5, 17, 71. Lancaster, 'Chronology', pp. 77, 84, gives 1823 and Winterbottom, 'Histories', p. 15, has 1823 or 1824. Young, *History*, p. 109, and Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 8, both have 1825. Soga, *South-Eastern Bantu*, p. 272, says Zwangendaba left in 1829, while Coxhead, *Native tribes*, p. 20, says he left in the 1850's.

[9] For the exact relationship between Soshangane and Zwide, see Bryant, *Olden times*, pp. 161, 279, 454.

[Text continues on page 9]

Each lord selected some of his quasi-related dependent men 173
and made them his lieutenants. A lieutenant[14] was responsible for 627
carrying out his lord's instructions and helped in keeping the peace 624
within the segment. Thus a dispute between two people in the same
segment was referred in the first instance to the lieutenants of their
lord, who reported their decision on the matter to him. If agreement
could not be reached the matter was referred to the lieutenants of
the lord's lord, that is, to the next superior segment, and so on until
the matter came before the Paramount Chief. A lord could override
the decision of his lieutenants if he wished. The Paramount
Chief's lieutenants were responsible for administering the poison [695]
ordeal (*mwavi*) when accusations of sorcery were made or when there [683]
was no other evidence.[15]

In the Nguni lineage, new inferior segments were formed mainly 173
by differentiation between brothers, or between sons of different 613
mothers. These types of differentiation occurred in the residential
system and gave rise to new primal segments but alongside other 695
processes of segmentation. The Nguni division of wives into great, 621
right- and left-hand was developed into an arrangement whereby a 631
man with many wives and many followers divided his wives into
bevies[16] of some half a dozen wives each and allocated his followers to specific bevies. Each leader of a bevy had her junior co-wives, her own and their sons, and her lieutenants and other dependants acquired by capture. Each of these groups of followers under a senior wife constituted a separate segment and we shall refer to the wife in charge of a segment of this kind as the lady (*nkosikazi*) of the segment. Sons, lieutenants and even quasi-related dependants who were not lieutenants were all able to found inferior segments of their own within their lady's segment. Thus with the passage of time every flourishing segment became subdivided internally into several inferior segments, and in addition there was often what we shall term a *rump*, consisting of dependants not allocated to any inferior segment.

Most of the Nguni settlements were small, but on their march 173
north the Ngoni lived in large compact villages containing over a 621
thousand huts and several thousand inhabitants. Within these
large villages people were arranged in terms of their segmentary 631
affiliation and it is for this reason that we have spoken of a 'residential' system. The members of each small primal segment lived

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[14] *Nduna*, pl. *nduna*. cf. Zulu *induna*.

[15] See Wiese, 'Expedição', pp. 470, 472, and 'Geschichte', pp. 188, 190.

[16] In earlier publications I used the term 'band' in place of 'bevy'. See my *Marriage*, p. iii.

173 621 631 together in a cluster of huts, and several clusters together formed a division, inhabited by members of a segment of greater span. Larger segments corresponded to complete villages and the largest segments of all contained many separate villages. The same general pattern of settlement was repeated at successive halting places on the migration, but as a segment grew in size by natural increase and by the addition of more captives, so its settlement grew from a cluster to a division and from a single village to a group of villages. In a large segment with many villages, the constituent inferior segments remained under the political leadership of the lord of the large segment but achieved a certain amount of autonomy. On many occasions the interests of one or more inferior segments diverged from those of the rest of the large segment, from what we shall term the *residue* of the large segment. This divergence of interest sometimes led to the disappearance of the large segment as an effective social unit and, at the highest level in the residential system, to splits in the State itself.

173 595 613 621 631 The first bevy of wives formed by a lord ranked senior to other bevies, and the wife in charge was the lord's great wife. Her eldest son was his main heir and the eldest son of each bevy leader was heir in its own segment. Yet sons, whether heirs or not, were able to establish segments of their own for their wives when they married and these segments remained as distinct social groups when an heir succeeded. Thus a man could be lord of a segment founded by his father and at the same time lord of a smaller segment, within the first, which he had founded himself. This arrangement was of fundamental importance in the working of the residential system, particularly in the formation of those large and politically dominant segments with which we are mainly concerned in this book, and still finds expression in the new villages founded by each reigning county chief. When the Paramount Chief, or one of his sons, founded a segment for a bevy of queens, the new segment was of village size and many men were called by the chief from existing segments to join the new one. As the segment grew in size, minor segments within it broke out to form separate villages of their own and the parent village became the headquarters of the group of villages and of the segment they formed. The headquarters of all large dispersed segments endured as social groups, as villages, despite the continual throwing off of more and more satellites. Thus the number of large villages, each the headquarters of a segment founded for a bevy of a reigning chief, increased as time went on. These villages remain to-day, and Ngoni history is largely the story of the formation and development of the segments associated with them.

5. *Under Zwangendaba's leadership*

When the Ngoni migration began, the greater portion of 173
Zwangendaba's followers belonged to the primal segment founded 595
for the great wife of Hlatshwayo, father of Zwangendaba. When 613
the migration began there were perhaps a thousand people in this 621
segment (this figure is largely guesswork). For convenience of
reference we shall refer to the various historically significant seg- 631
ments by numbers. Thus segment 1, with the proper name of 643
Elangeni, is that of Hlatshwayo's great wife. The structural
relationship of seventeen numbered segments to each other and to
the royal genealogy is shown in Diagram 1. A list of their proper
names and of the names of the lords and ladies associated with
them, is given in Table II, together with information on three
segments superior to segment 1 and on three other segments which
cannot be placed on Diagram 1 for lack of information.

This diagram and the accompanying table are skeletons, showing only those few men and women who were heads of major groups which, partly fortuitously, have endured to the present day and are now large chiefdoms. There were many more queens than the ten shown on the diagram and very many more sons of chiefs, regional governors, lieutenants and other less exalted men and women all of whom were in charge of named segments, many of which still survive, forming part of a single system. The same principles of organization applied at all levels in the residential system. Here we have set out the names and positions of only the major limbs of the tree of State. We must not forget that the minor branches and little twigs were part of the same growing whole.

Segment 1 included the greater portion of the State, but it is clear from Elmslie and Fraser, and made explicit by Read, that the headquarters of several superior segments were also present on the march north. Read states that villages belonging to nine generations of chiefs were still in existence in northern Nyasaland in 1936. There is no direct evidence from Fort Jameson, for there are no headquarters of ancient royal segments there, but there are several villages belonging to the lieutenants of segments founded by Zwangendaba's father. I have therefore included in Table II the three superior segments whose names are given by Chibambo.[17] It is probable that Zwangendaba had succeeded to the position of

[Text continues on page 15]

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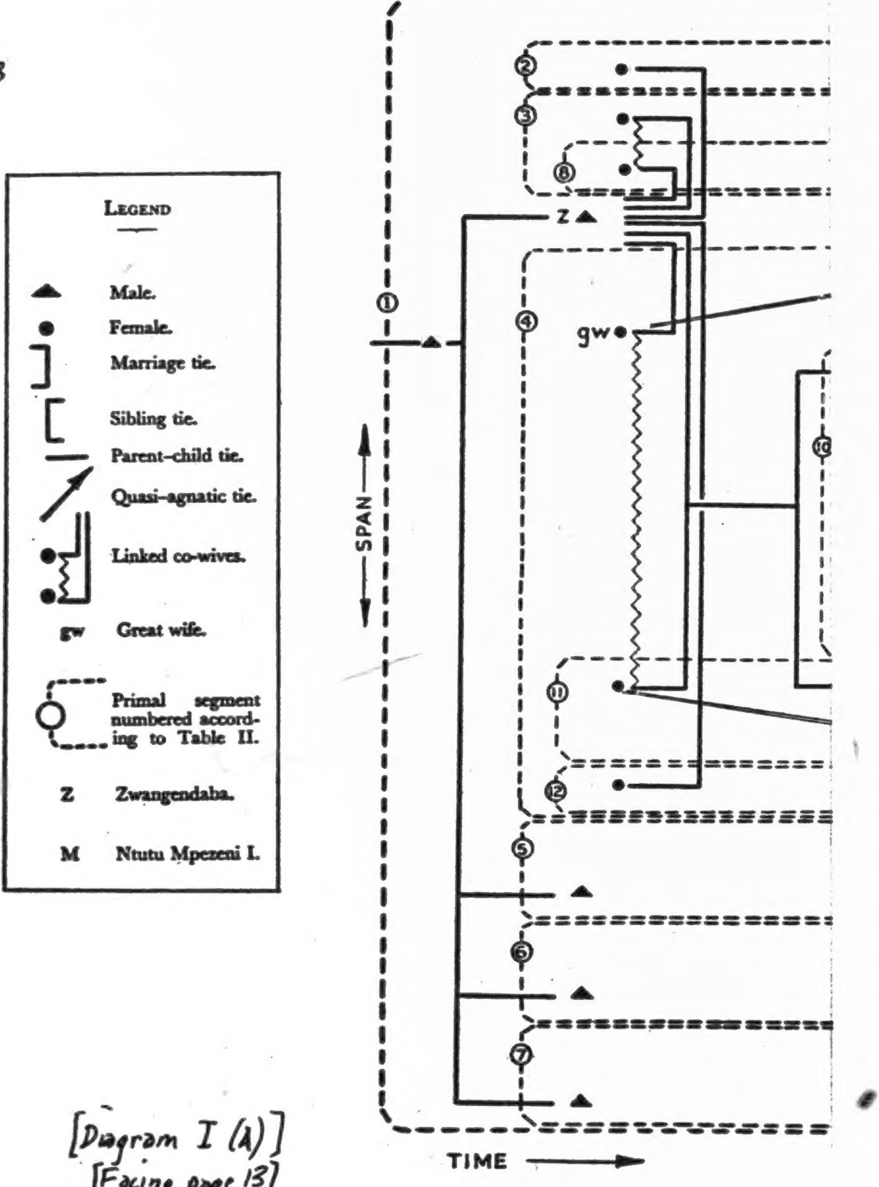
[17] Read, 'Tradition', pp. 465*f*; Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 14.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

173
575
613
● 621
631
643

DIAGRAM 1. THE ROYAL LINE AND THE RESIDENTIAL SYSTEM
SEGMENTS 1-17


LEGEND
Male.
Female.
Marriage tie.
Sibling tie.
Parent-child tie.
Quasi-agnatic tie.
Linked co-wives.
gw Great wife.
Primal segment numbered according to Table II.
Z Zwangendaba.
M Ntutu Mpezeni I.
Z
gw
SPAN
TIME
①
②
③
④
⑤
⑥
⑦
⑧
⑩
⑪
⑫

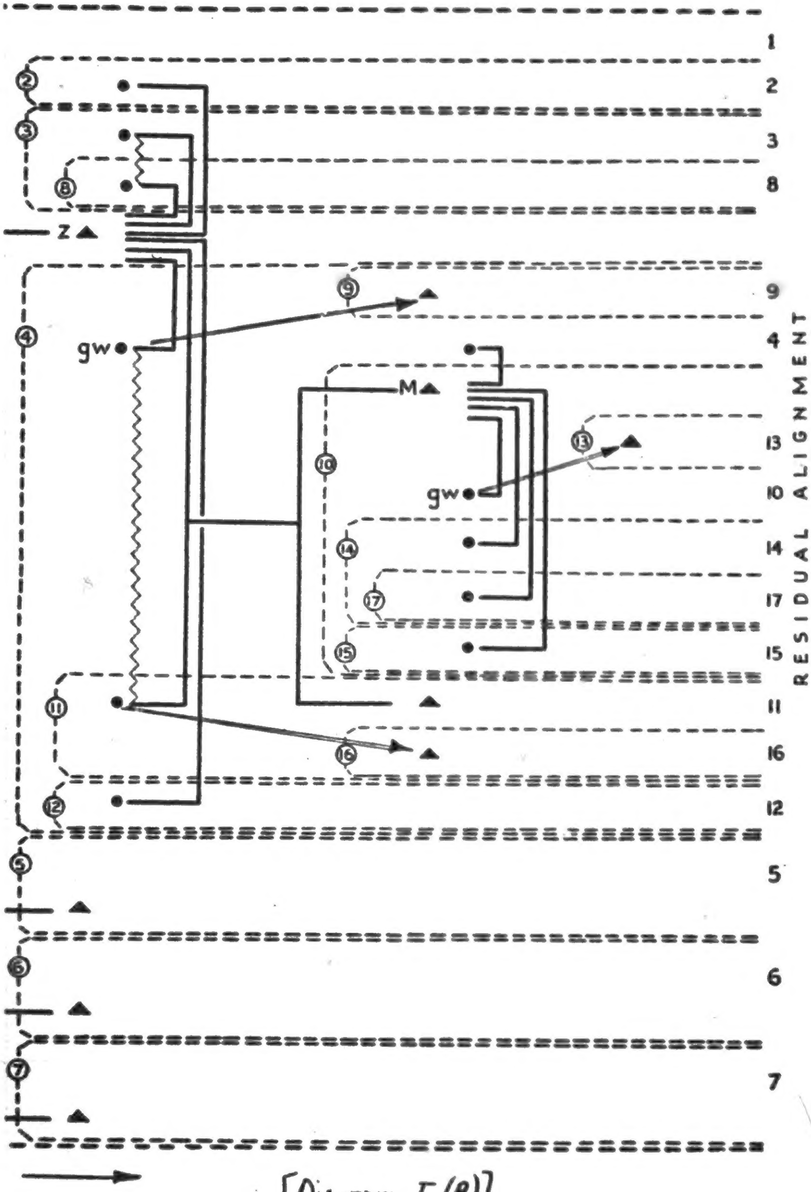
[Diagram I (A)]
[Facing page 13]

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

173
595
613
621
631
643

DIAGRAM 1. THE ROYAL LINE AND THE RESIDENTIAL SYSTEM

SEGMENTS 1–17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gw
M
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gw
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⑯
⑫
⑤
⑥
⑦
RESIDUAL ALIGNMENT

[Diagram I (B)]
[Facing page 13]

lord of many segments superior to his own and that at least part of 173
these superior segments came with him on the migration. 613

Within segment 1, Zwangendaba established inferior segment 595
18 (Emveyeyeni or Mveleleni) for his great wife. This segment or 621
part of it was subsequently annihilated and for that reason its 631
relationship to later segments is obscure; I have not been able to 643
place it on Diagram 1. Three of Zwangendaba's younger brothers
founded segments 5, 6 and 7 (Kunyeni, Nyungweni and Engwenyameni)
within segment 1. Zwangendaba formed two subsidiary
bevies of wives and made segments 3 and 2 (Ekwendeni and
Emcisweni)[18] for them, presumably inferior to segment 18.
Another bevy of wives with their own segment 19 (Emsizini) is
mentioned by Chibambo and Rangeley, but its relation to other
segments is not recorded. It seems probable that segment 19, like
segments 2 and 3, was inferior to the ill-fated segment 18.

There was a practice among the Ngoni whereby some of the 173
co-wives in a bevy were grouped into *linked* pairs or trios. If a wife 595
was barren or old or if her parents wished to honour her husband, 613
she was given an agnatic kinswoman as her junior linked co-wife. 643
Children born by the junior wife then ranked as if they had been
borne by her linked senior.[19] Zwangendaba's great wife, the lady
of segment 18, was barren but she had a junior linked co-wife who
became pregnant. During her pregnancy an incident occurred of
historical importance. It was, and still is, customary to offer beer [273]
to the Paramount Chief whenever it is brewed in the headquarters
of important segments. During this wife's pregnancy beer brewed
in the headquarters of segment 18 was offered to Zwangendaba.
He thought that the beer was doctored or had filth in it and
assumed that there was a plot to kill him. He sent warriors to [682]
destroy the headquarters of the segment, which thus disappeared
as a political unit. However some of the probable constituent

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[18] Rangeley, 'Mtwalo', p. 58, records an alternative tradition that the lady of segment 3 was the first woman to be made great wife, and that she was later demoted in favour of the lady of segment 18.

[19] See my *Marriage*, pp. 4, 6, 34, 94.

←

NOTES ¹

(a) Ancestor of present Chief Mlonyeni, Fort Manning Division.
(b) Ancestor of former Chief Mlonyeni and present Chief Teleka, Fort Jameson District.
(c) Not an ancestor of present Chief Misholo, who belongs to segment 11.
(d) Not to be confused with a segment of the same name formed by Chief Mpezeni III in 1948.
(e) Not shown on Diagram 10.

¹ [see table on page 14.-Analyst]

have no clear history of this kind of situation, but it seems possible 595
that when there was no heir who could clearly claim ascendancy 611
over the whole of a primal segment, the segment then split into two.
Thus in our example, if there were sons in bevies 2 and 3 but not in
bevy 1, the primal segment formed for the great wife in bevy 1
would in the next generation have split into two segments, one led
by the heir in bevy 2 and the other by the heir in bevy 3. This [578]
hypothesis would be in accord with some of the disputes which I
recorded between eldest sons by different mothers, each claiming
to be the principal heir of their father.

Information drawn from village histories shows that there were 578
sometimes similar disputes about which son of the great wife should 611
be heir. The eldest son could be passed over if he were an obvious 595
fool, and there was, therefore, the possibility of conflict between
those who thought him a fool and those who did not. When the
first wife married did not become the great wife, her eldest son was
sometimes older than the great wife's son, and was sometimes his
rival as heir. The contradiction between superordination by age
and by status of mother among half-brothers brought up in the
same vicinity led to conflict. A fourth mode of conflict was between
a man's son and his lieutenant. Where the son was unsuccessful in
commanding the loyalty of his father's dependants, effective
leadership in his father's segment sometimes passed to the lieutenant.

We should, I think, be mistaken if we regarded these modes of 578
dispute as causes. They were rather the idioms in which, in this
particular system, rivalry was expressed between contiguous segments. 557
Many dependants brought power and prestige for their
lord, and the struggle for dependants went on within this remarkably
flexible and yet orderly system. A man attracted dependants
by remaining loyal to his lord; yet the more dependants he gained
the more he differentiated himself from his lord. If a man was not
the rightful heir in one segment, then he could try to gain the
support of the lord of a higher segment and hope thereby to alter
the distribution of power in the lower one. This consideration
became particularly important after the arrival of Europeans, who [648]
exercised control over the whole State and at the same time were
ignorant of and not bound by the values which maintained the old
system.

We have mentioned the possibility of conflict between heirs 578
arising from the method of ranking bevies. The same principle of 611
ranking applied to segments and headquarters as well as to bevies of 621
wives, and there were similar possibilities of conflict. In certain 554
situations it appears as if that which was founded first was dominant,

554 and in other situations that which was founded last. The head-
578 quarters of the highest segment was in some sense capital of the
611 nation, yet chieftainship had already passed from it and it was less
621 important in other ways than the headquarters founded by the
[643] reigning chief. This apparent contradiction applied within every
large segment. We have endeavoured to isolate these different contexts by our distinction between primal and residual segments, but as soon as we attempt to arrange villages or bevies of wives in a linear order without reference to the relationship of their associated segments to one another, the contradiction reappears.

A clear and accepted sequence of heirs would have been
621 appropriate to a segmentary system in which segments continued to
611 hold together in all circumstances. Ngoni segments did not do this,
and the simple linear sequence of heirs was lacking. The successive formation of inferior segments implied increased structural separation between the first inferior segment to be formed and the headquarters, and hence less likelihood that the former would provide the main heir. As in lineage systems, the farther back the point of departure from the main line the greater the structural separation from it. But whereas in lineage systems it is the junior lines which are continually diverging from the main stem, in the Ngoni system the main heir was the first to break away from his father, who remained longer in close contact with his junior sons. Seniority within the newly formed undivided segment implied early differentiation within it, and hence early separation from its headquarters. Thus, the general principle of increasing separation with the passage of time, together with the particular principle of segment formation in order of seniority, combined to make a system of great flexibility despite essential regularity and uniformity. On the death of each segment head there was a shift of power within his segment and to some extent a formal recognition of the structural separation which had proceeded gradually during his lifetime. The headquarters founded by successive heads of segments persisted as the home of groups whose interests they symbolized. The history of the segments and of the nation itself was embodied in the relationships enduring between successive headquarters.

When a small segment was founded it was usually manned by
557 people drawn from the rump of the immediately superior segment,
611 that is, from those men and women in the superior segment who
621 had not already been allocated to some inferior segment within it.
However it is clear that this rule was often over-ridden. When the
[622] lord of a large segment formed a new inferior segment for a wife or
son he was able to command the services of everyone within his

segment, even of those who had been allocated to existing inferior 557 segments. If he thought fit he could shift them from one inferior 611 segment to another within his own segment. This process was 621 particularly relevant to the formation of new segments for the great [622] wives of men who were the heirs or lords of large segments. A new lord, making his great wife's segment after the death of his father, did not confine himself to the rump of his father's segment but selected men he thought he could trust from anywhere within his father's primal segment, whether or not they had made segments of their own. Similarly a lord sometimes took a man who occupied an unimportant position in the segment of one of his wives and promoted him to be lieutenant in a newly formed bevy. The more important the lord or heir, the greater the structural distance his dependants could be moved. Thus while the processes by which the Paramount Chief and a man with only a few followers made [643] segments for bevies of wives were formally the same, the consequences were quite different. In the former case, many hundreds of people were involved and many key men were shifted in their allegiance in order to provide the new segment with lieutenants and followers. In the latter, few people were concerned and the event was not of general interest. The formal processes remained the same at all levels in society, but what in one case was essentially a political action in which a Paramount Chief acted as head of a State was in the other largely a matter of domestic reorganization. It is characteristic of the Ngoni State that the transition from one state of affairs to the other was a gradual one.

Occasionally a man moved himself from one segment to 621 another on his own initiative. This happened only infrequently 557 and it seems probable that it was only when a man who had quarrelled with his own segment sought asylum with the reigning chief that a move of this kind could be made. Chibambo records an incident in which many men transferred from their former segments to one newly formed by the reigning chief, but adds that later they returned to their old segments. A similar incident from the Fort Jameson group is noted below.* Despite these exceptions it nevertheless remains true that for the most part a man's affiliation to his segment was fixed and could be altered only by the actions of his political superiors.

We have spoken of the formation of segments, but not yet of their disappearance. Many minor segments faded away because their members died or because they were moved elsewhere by a lord. Sometimes a segment ceased to be an effective social unit

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* Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 35; see p. 140.

621 557 because of a divergence of interest between one or more of its inferior segments and the residue. In some instances all the people in the segment were killed, as presumably was the intention when Zwangendaba sent warriors to destroy segment 18. In other instances not everyone was killed and those whose lives were spared were drafted to some other part of a major segment to which they belonged. In the only examples I know of, in which either of these last two alternatives was adopted, action was taken by the highest lieutenants in the segments founded for the great wives of reigning chiefs, and was prompted by allegedly hostile acts directed against the chief. Heads of lesser segments could not readily act in this way for although the Paramount Chief and his lieutenants did not possess a monopoly of this power, they regarded its exercise by others with suspicion as a threat to the unity of the State.

If some of the members of an eliminated segment escaped annihilation, they might presently reform themselves into a new segment and begin a separate existence again. If they were not kinsmen of their lord, no structural complications ensued. If, however, relatives of the lord were concerned, then there might be conflict between the position required of them because of their relationship and that in which their new segment was formed. [621] Thus, if the village of a great wife was annihilated and later a new village was founded for her, this could never replace the original one. Her subordinate bands of co-wives had formed their villages by breaking out from her original village, and that had been their headquarters. The new village was founded after they had made their own, and was not their headquarters, even though they still acknowledged that its head was their great co-wife. As we have seen, such a sequence of events occurred at a critical stage of Ngoni history, and may have influenced the way in which the State split.

2. *Age-sets*

The residential system was dominant in deciding the alignment 561 of persons in most situations, but the waging of war and execution 701 of certain ceremonies were organized on a different basis. The 702 army was divided into age-set regiments. About every three or four years,[1] depending on the military requirements and on the availability of lads of the right age, a new regiment was formed from all the boys aged about fifteen years old. They assembled at the Paramount Chief's great wife's village and were inducted into the army. The chief gave them a regimental name and they came under the orders of his senior lieutenants. An experienced warrior

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[1] cf. Wiese, 'Expedição', p. 470.

could assemble for hunting and fighting, similar to the sectors 561
attached to chiefly villages among the Zulu.[8] 701

Women were organized into parallel age-sets, led by daughters of the royal line and other important young women. Men and [562]
women of corresponding sets danced together on ceremonial occasions, and among themselves women in a regiment used to fight 'to see who was strongest'. After marriage a woman ceased to participate actively in these regimental dances and fights.

The most important national festival was the first fruits 561
ceremony held annually at the headquarters of Zwangendaba's 796
great wife's segment. This was organized on an age-set basis, and there was much competitive dancing. Special songs were sung, and on conclusion of the ceremony a large national raid might be [726]
undertaken.

The Ngoni depended largely on the efficiency of their army 561
for the continual inflow of captives on which the strength and 701
continued existence of the State depended. The age-set system 727
provided them with an efficient army, and in addition was a means whereby the centrifugal tendency inherent in their segmentary system was partly checked.

Each major segment had members in each regiment, and each 561
regiment was drawn from every major segment. It provided the 701
central authority with an instrument by which the segments could 621
be held together, for on national raids the young men of every segment were in danger. No one segment, save the State itself, could claim the glory for a successful battle, but only the regiments involved. The Paramount Chief did not possess a complete mono- [643]
poly of force, for we have already noted that sometimes segment heads organized their own raids. But these were small affairs,

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[8] cf. Gluckman, 'Kingdom of the Zulu', p. 31.

1

(a) Mpezeni I's regiment. Lancaster says Mpezeni I was in Mayunge. [114]
(b) Nsingu's regiment.
(c) Mpezeni II's regiment.
(d) Maola. Wiese and some of my informants support the earlier position; Lancaster and other of my informants support the later one.
(e) Maiyiza. Lancaster and one of my informants support the earlier position; a more reliable informant supports the later one.

Wiese gives two other regimental names. His Madouda or Madoda is merely the status term *madoda*, meaning 'mature, respected and important [559]
men'. His other regimental name, Madginga or Madjinga, is probably also a status term, meaning 'very old men'. Rangeley has the names Tata-kakulu, Mang'ombe, Isimpisi, Makeke, Mabacu, Zimfezi, Manyoni.

Sources: twenty-three independent informants, offering partly conflicting accounts; Wiese, 'Expedição', p. 477, and 'Geschichte', p. 195; Lancaster, 'Chronology', p. 82; Rangeley, 'Mtwalo', p. 59.

1[Footnotes pertain to Table III, page 38.-Analyst]

561 involving perhaps between a dozen and a hundred men, whereas
621 the Paramount Chief could, so long as the State remained intact,
701 command the services of perhaps 10,000 warriors.

This unifying effect of the age-set system applied particularly
561 to the recent captives. It appears to have been through the regimental
727 system that recent captives, both men and women, were
621 indoctrinated into Ngoni ways and made to feel that they, too,
were Ngoni. In the residential system, recent captives were dependants
rather than lords. In the age-set system there was no such
distinction. Men captives were drafted into the regiment appropriate
[702] to their apparent age, and boys were enrolled with their
coevals. They were called upon to fight in the same way as their
aristocratic comrades, and were offered the same prospects of
promotion, both within the age-set system and in the segmentary
organization, as a result of successful fighting. Many of the well-remembered
segment heads who achieved rapid promotion after
capture are described as being successful warriors.

The annual first fruits ceremony (*nkwala*) was organized on an
561 age-set basis. Although I was not able to establish details of this
796 ceremony, it is clear that it was the most memorable national
ceremony in the year, and that it provided supernatural sanction
to the cohesion of the State and of the various regiments, under the
leadership of the Paramount Chief. There were dances and mock
fighting between regiments, and women also fought with each other
in age-set groups of some kind or other. Read states that the
description of the ceremony she was given showed much similarity
with the corresponding Swazi ceremony. Commentators on the
[171] Swazi and Zulu ceremonies describe them as strengthening the
army and the kingship and unifying the nation, by a dramatic
exaggeration of the conflicts as well as the links within it, and it is
probable that this was true also of the Ngoni.[*]

[167] The Ngoni and their neighbours formed part of a wide social
system, and the relationship between them was a political one.
648 When the Ngoni moved from place to place, the area round them
631 was vacated by its former inhabitants, so as to leave a dwelling-area
for the Ngoni and a no-man's-land isolating it from other
inhabited areas. These moves were forced on the indigenous
people by Ngoni raids. There were no direct relations between
[721] States, for there was little concerted opposition to Ngoni raiding

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[*] cf. Read, 'Tradition', p. 470; Kuper *African Aristocracy*, pp. 223-5; Gluckman, 'First fruits ceremonies', pp. 30-3. The Swazi ceremony is called *incwala*, and Read's informants called it *inqwala*, but my informants had lost their click consonants.

631 kept at his village. Although his lords, and ultimately the Para-
622 mount Chief, had rights in the cattle, their day-to-day care was
[422] his responsibility and he had in practice the greatest say in their
disposal, either for consumption, for payment of bridewealth, or
for damages awarded against a member of his segment. He was
head of the most clearly demarcated local group and was respon-
sible for it to the heads of superior segments. The village was the
cattle-herding unit, but for agricultural tasks it seems probable
[476] that in large villages the co-operative unit was the division.
Agricultural work was directed, at least so far as women were
[462] concerned, by the lady of the division. I have no clear information
on how domestic tasks such as cooking were organized within the
village but it seems probable that individual women cooked for
their husbands and for the children in their care.[18]

361 Fraser writes of the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland that a village
622 headman had special ritual duties to perform when his village
shifted to a new site, and Rattray reports a similar procedure for
the southern Ngoni. Wiese mentions an oracular method of
[787] selecting a new village site among the Fort Jameson Ngoni, but is
silent on whether or not the headman had a special role to play.[19]
I could gain no information from my own informants about former
practices, but nowadays the headman has no specific ritual to
perform when a village shifts.

There is little evidence about the number of villages in the
162 Ngoni State. There are a few conflicting observations on population
and size and number of villages in the Fort Jameson group at the
time of the conquest,[20] and we have estimates for the population of
different groups in recent years, but estimates of the population and
number of villages at earlier dates are all highly speculative.

The term for lieutenant, *nduna*, was used at all levels in the
691 residential system and was applied even to men who had not yet
621 founded their own segments. As already mentioned, a lieutenant
624 was a quasi-related dependant, not a kinsman, of his lord who was
[608] selected to be in charge of a section of his lord's dependants and to
carry out the instructions of his lord. Some of my informants
referred to a ceremony at which a new office of lieutenant was
[554] created and a feather placed in the hair of the newly appointed
man, but others appeared not to have heard of this custom. The

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[18] Barnes, *Marriage*, pp. 15*f*. For the Ngoni of southern Nyasaland, see Read, 'Standards', p. 16.

[19] Fraser, *Primitive people*, pp. 203*ff*; Rattray, *Folk-lore stories*, pp. 36*ff*, 109*ff*, 196*ff*; Wiese, 'Geschichte', p. 199. In his 'Expedição', p. 480, Wiese associates this method only with a change of residence by the Paramount Chief.

[20] See pp. 103*f*.

lord's dependants placed under a lieutenant's care became more 631
specifically his dependants and eventually he appointed one or 621
more of the men among them to be his own lieutenants. Thus it 624
was possible for Z to be the lieutenant of Y and at the same time for Y to be the lieutenant of X. When Y died, his son became X's lieutenant or, if Y had no son, Z might succeed him as X's lieutenant.

A lord with but few dependants sometimes appointed one or more of them as his lieutenants without specifically dividing his dependants among them. Thus, a lieutenant might be appointed without the formation of a segment for him, and only later would he differentiate from the rest of his lord's dependants those for whom he was directly responsible.

The ranking of lieutenants was one of the least stable parts of the residential system. In a village under a lord there were lieutenants in charge of segments forming divisions within the village. As their segments grew in size, the lieutenants broke out of the village to found new satellite villages. A new set of lieutenants was gradually appointed to take their places in charge of the people remaining in the headquarters, and in the course of time the new set also broke away from the headquarters village.[31] Though they had moved out from the village the lieutenants still retained their positions as lieutenants within the primal segment of which it was the headquarters. Thus in a large segment containing many villages there was a long ranked roster of lieutenants, of which only the junior members still lived in the segment headquarters. Further proliferation of lieutenants sometimes took place when an heir succeeded as lord of the segment but did not found a new segment of his own. The new lord appointed his own lieutenants, so that within the same segment, and partly within the same settlement, there were two sets of lieutenants, one senior by time of appointment, the other enjoying the favour of the present head of the segment. When in these circumstances one of the senior set died, his eldest son sometimes had difficulty in asserting his position as lieutenant; and in this way the senior set, or part of it, lost control of the segment to the more recently appointed men.

It was in keeping with the expanding social boundaries of the 631
State, and of the high degree of mobility within it, that there was 646
no formally constituted council. Some contemporary accounts
mention a tribal council, but it seems clear that until very recently, [648]
when the Administration tried to institute a council with defined membership, there has never been a legislative or executive body

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[31] cf. my 'Fort Jameson Ngoni', pp. 197*f*.

631 to which some men definitely belonged and others definitely did
646 not. When matters of national importance needed decision, they
were discussed at a meeting attended by at least all the lieutenants
of the various bevies of the Paramount Chief, and all the spokesmen
mentioned in accounts of meetings with Europeans during the later
period and who can now be identified belong to this category. It
seems possible that the heads of other major segments also took
part in these discussions, and that other men listened to them even
if they did not take part.

643 The role played in tribal affairs by brothers and junior sons of
the Paramount Chief is not clear. The Paramount Chief did not
627 himself actively intervene in many domestic matters until they were
644 specifically referred to him by his lieutenants, and it seems possible
that within their own segments other members of the royal house
behaved in the same manner. At least nowadays some aristocratic
headmen, not necessarily members of the royal family, behave in
this aloof way. The head of the segment, like the head of the
[622] village, represents its common interest, its unity, and cannot inter-
[624] vene on his own initiative in the affairs of his people. He lies beyond
the reach of their quarrels and disputes, and has to be brought into
or informed of them in his judicial capacity by his lieutenants.
Wiese says that previously members of the royal house were the
real governors and judges in their segments, but that by 1891 in
three cases out of four effective power had passed to their lieutenants
and that they were merely 'show chiefs'.[22] This observation appears
to confirm the thesis that with increased segmentation effective
control passed from the head of the primal segment to the heads of
the inferior segments within it, leaving the head of the primal
segment as ceremonial head; but we do not know what evidence if
any Wiese had about earlier conditions. It seems probable that
before Wiese's time, as well as during it, the heads of large segments
ruled through, as well as with the approval of, their lieutenants.
So strongly does this principle still apply to the office of Paramount
Chief that when recently a brawl began at a beer party attended
[579] by the Chief, he at once ran away, lest in the mêlée he might be
forced to take direct action.[23]

621 Thus we see that in the Ngoni residential system, although
segments were enduring social groups and the pattern of relation-
631 ships once laid down could not be altered in formal terms, yet in
fact there was a continual movement in the disposition of political

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[22] Wiese, 'Expedição', p. 470.

[23] Gluckman reports similar conditions among the Lozi, where there is a maxim, 'The chief is not a policeman'. See his 'Lozi of North-Western Rhodesia'.

power. The history of the State and indeed of each subdivision 621
within it was encapsulated in the formal relations between royal 631
headquarters and between segments. Yet the system was always growing and every few years brought a new royal capital, a new chief, new headquarters for the heirs of large segments and new ambitious men as lieutenants. Each generation also brought greater divergence of interest between the constituent parts of each segment and of the State, as we shall discuss later. Before going on to examine the conditions under which the State split we shall turn aside to compare the Ngoni residential system with similar social structures found in some other societies.

4. *Continually segmenting systems*

Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, in their *African Political Systems*, 121
have provided us with a solid foundation for a typology of political 114
systems in simple societies. It is therefore appropriate to consider what place the Ngoni State has in this typology. The authors distinguish three types of political system in Africa,[24] and we shall attempt to determine to which of these the Ngoni State belongs.

Their first type includes those small societies in which everyone is kin to everyone else, and in which political relations are coterminous with kinship relations. It is clear that Ngoni society was not of this kind.

The other two types are those referred to as primitive states, or Group A, and stateless societies, or Group B. Primitive states are characterized by the presence of organized government, i.e. centralized authority, administrative machinery and judicial institutions, and of cleavages of wealth, privilege and status corresponding to the distribution of power and authority. In stateless societies there is no government, in this sense, and political relations are primarily regulated by a segmentary system of permanent unilateral descent groups.

This classification is sometimes taken to imply that segmentary systems are found only in stateless societies but not in primitive states. This implication does not follow inevitably from the scheme of classification, though it is compatible with it. It is, however, easy to assume that this implication is intended, for the authors frequently use the adjective segmentary to characterize stateless societies in contrast to primitive states. This implication is false, as can be shown by reference to a number of societies, and cannot have been intended by the authors, for elsewhere Fortes has written that 'It

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[24] Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, *African Political Systems*, pp. 6*f*.

The genealogies which related members of one segment to those of 611
another were made up not only of links from father to son but also 613
from lord to dependant, and were expressed in terms of the names
of segments rather than the names of the people who headed them.
A man related himself to the Paramount Chief not by his own
genealogy but by the pedigree of the segment to which he belonged.[39]
Although the number of links in such a pedigree may have been
half a dozen or more, it did not cover more than two or three
generations, whereas in most lineage systems remembered genealogies
cover many more generations. The present kinship nomenclature, 601
which mainly employs words of Nsenga origin, does not
group relatives on a lineage, or segmental, basis but by generation. 171
Presumably the system of nomenclature in use during the early 174
stages of the Ngoni migration was similar to the present Zulu
system in which lineage categories are used slightly. Tribes like
the Shona and Cewa, from whom many captives were taken,
employ systems of nomenclature with great lineage emphasis, but
this emphasis is patrilineal among the former and matrilineal
among the latter. The difficulty of combining patrilineal and
matrilineal categories may have prompted the emergence of a
generation system of nomenclature.[40]

Another point of difference between the Ngoni and many 171
people with lineage systems is that, other than possibly the rites 769
associated with choosing a new village site, there seem to have been
no ritual observances or ancestor cult which would have differentiated 796
one segment from another and united the various segments
of lower order within a higher one. The only ancestors to whom
supplication was made were those of the Paramount Chief. They
were believed to be concerned with the well-being of the whole
nation, and when sacrifices were made to them, the officiants were
not their agnatic descendants but the Paramount Chief's lieutenants.
We may, however, regard the byre in the headquarters village as a [778]
ceremonial, rather than a ritual, centre for a large segment.

In these four respects the Ngoni residential system differed 611
from most lineage systems. On the other hand, in respect of other 631
criteria it was like them. A segment recognized its identity and 591
unity in contrast to other groups; rights and obligations of segment 613
membership were distinguished from those of kinship; segments 621
endured in time beyond the death of their founding members;

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[39] cf. Read, 'Tradition', p. 466.

[40] cf. Barnes, 'Fort Jameson Ngoni', pp. 221-5; Gluckman, 'Kinship and marriage', pp. 170-1; Holleman, *Hera kinship*, pp. 1-18; Pretorius, 'Terms of relationship', pp. 44-8.

611 segments nested in the same way as lineage segments; and a seg-
613 ment could be referred to by the name of its original head. A
591 residential segment was not associated with a particular locality in
621 quite the same way as lineage segments often are among settled
631 peoples, for even the State itself was not tied to any particular
place. Within the area occupied by the State at any one time, the villages belonging to one major segment seem to have intermingled with those of another, for there were not any temporary boundaries defining major segment areas, even for those led by regional governors. But smaller segments, occupying single villages or less, may be said to have been associated with a particular locality at any one time.

Our concept of a lineage system would then require con-
121 siderable stretching to include the Ngoni residential system. It
171 seems preferable to employ the wide term 'continually segmenting
611 systems' when speaking of this general class of system, and to
distinguish within this category a number of different varieties.
621 Lineage systems belong to one variety, the Ngoni residential
631 system to another. These two varieties do not exhaust the category.
The Nyakyusa system of continually bifurcating states appears to belong to a third variety, and there may be more.

There are other criteria which have been used to distinguish different varieties of lineage system, and which we may apply summarily to the Ngoni residential system. Despite the great importance of women in the system, it was clearly a patrilineal and not a matrilineal system. It was a graded system with a single head to each segment, like the Zulu and unlike the egalitarian Nuer. The system had a single apex, one highest segment embracing the whole society, like the Gusii and unlike the multi-capped society of the Tallensi. As a corollary of this it had sharp boundaries and did not form part of a chain of interlinked societies. There was little economic differentiation save in the control of cattle and there
[183] was, on the surface, complete cultural homogeneity imposed by
the State.

The characteristic formation of rump segments is lacking in
[170] many lineage systems, but is found among the Zulu and in the
611 Swazi lineage,[41] and perhaps more widely, although in both these
621 societies the process does not seem to have been as greatly developed
631 as among the Ngoni. Among the Zulu and Swazi it led to a series
of homesteads or villages corresponding to successive holders of the office of lineage head or king. Among the Ngoni not only was each

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[41] cf. Holleman, 'Twee-eenheidsbeginsel van die Zulu' and 'Zulu *isigodi*'; Bryant, *Dictionary*, pp. 729*f*, s.v. *isizinda*; and Kuper, *African Aristocracy*, pp. 40*f*.

successive head of a major segment memorialized in this way, but the major divisions of his polygynous household as well. 611 621 631

6. *Splitting the State*

When splits occurred in the State, the cleavages were along segmentary, and not age-set, lines. The headquarters of the highest segment was differentiated from the major subdivisions within that segment, and the various divergent groups can be identified by the different segments which they represented. Once fission had taken place, a realignment of segments was sometimes necessary. When after the death of Zwangendaba his great wife's segment was split, in each divergent group the man who was nearest in the line of succession to head of her segment claimed to be the rightful heir, and on the strength of that claim assumed leadership of the group. 631 668 178 [622]

Fission in the State was the end result of segmentation within it. Here we are using these two terms for two different processes. By segmentation we mean the process by which any social group becomes subdivided internally while retaining its own unity and cohesion. By fission we mean the process by which a social group divides into two or more distinct groups, so that the original group disappears as a social entity.[43] Fission in the Ngoni State occurred without affecting the arrangement of segments within each group, but did disrupt the highest segment of all, within which the divergent groups had hitherto been contained. Segmentation was a process of growth taking place at all levels but particularly at the bottom of the hierarchy of political groups, while fission was a process occurring only at the highest level. The process of segmentation in one generation could not alter the formal arrangement of higher segments determined in the previous generation, even though with each generation there was in fact an effective shift in the distribution of political power accompanied by spatial differentiation. The process of fission did not bring into being any new segments, but merely dissolved the highest segment of all as a cohering political unit. The two processes were thus formally and in reality quite distinct, even though it is clear that they were not independent of one another. Increasing divergence of interest found expression at first in the creation of separate segments and ultimately in the formation of separate states. [121]

The processes of segmentation and of spatial differentiation within the State were in general peaceful. Fission was a hazardous [669]

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[43] This use of terms differs from that of Fortes. He uses 'segmentation' to refer to a *state* of internal subdivision within a group, and 'fission' to refer to the *process* of internal subdivision. cf. Fortes, *Web of kinship*, *passim*. I am indebted to Mrs. U. P. Mayer for this observation.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

These decisions have been taken within frames of reference beyond the reach of our analysis and beyond the reach of Ngoni persuasion. We are here concerned with the way in which Ngoni society has been adapted and has adapted itself to these diverse intrusions from outside. 177 648

3. *Chiefs*

In the old residential system there was no definite category of persons whom we regard as chiefs. In the literature the lords of major segments are sometimes called chiefs, sometimes indunas (i.e. lieutenants), but it is clear that the importance of any particular segment varied from one time and situation to another, and that the only constant relations between positions in the social structure were vertical ones, between lord and dependant, and not horizontal, between persons at the same level in the hierarchy but in different parts of it. The administrative scheme introduced by the Whites provided for horizontal categorization as well as vertical grouping. There were to be a definite number of chiefs, district headmen, and later village headmen, whose names would appear on the Administration's files. The only indigenous categories of this kind were those of Paramount Chief and regional governor, and for this reason alone it was inevitable that the relationship between the old and new systems should be complex. Although the young Mpezeni II was not the only person to be called chief, his superior status was always recognized and later received formal ratification in the qualification Paramount. The regional governors may, perhaps, have formed a category of persons at the same level in the old hierarchy, but they were not very numerous, perhaps only a dozen in number, and under the new dispensation some managed to become chiefs or district headmen, while others failed to do so. Village headmen in the old system were lords of segments of many different orders of segmentation and of varying importance. If the large pre-conquest villages had continued, then perhaps their heads might have secured Administrative recognition. As it was, post-conquest settlements were all much smaller and there were more of them. 622 631 643 648 [621]

Apart from these formal considerations, the peculiar circumstances of the war introduced distortion. Some important people were killed in the fighting, others ran away, and the followers of others were scattered. More significantly, the arrival of the Administration, of traders and missions, provided means whereby people whose segments were of minor importance could advance themselves politically and gain control of large sections of the population. 648 559

632 634 [621] In these three counties there were no instances of two other types of village found rarely in Ngoniland. Occasionally an immigrant labourer working on the Fort Jameson tobacco farms manages to attract sufficient followers from among other labourers and his local affines to found a new village in an Ngoni chiefdom. The other rare type of village is formed by direct administrative [648] action. The Administration has been largely concerned to amalgamate existing villages rather than to create new ones. In at least one instance, however, scattered clusters of huts inhabited by people who had fled from several different villages to avoid coming under agricultural control have been united into a new village under a headman of their own choosing. One example of each of these rare types of village is included in the sample of villages analysed in Table VII (p. 133).

621 631 634

TABLE IV. ORIGIN OF VILLAGES IN SELECTED COUNTIES, 1948

	Number of villages in county, classified by origin				
County	*County segment*	*Other segment under Mpezeni*	*Other Ngoni groups*	*Other tribes, joining Ngoni after 1898*	*Total*
X	60 (72%)	4 (5%)	1 (1%)	18 (22%)	83 (100%)
Y	26 (55%)	10 (21%)	0 (0%)	11 (23%)	47 (100%)
Z	59 (70%)	16 (19%)	0 (0%)	9 (11%)	84 (100%)
Total	145 (68%)	30 (14%)	1 (0.5%)	38 (18%)	214 (100%)

Number of counties in Northern Rhodesia under Mpezeni 10
Number of villages in Northern Rhodesia under Mpezeni 540 approximately

It will be seen from Table IV that about two-thirds of the villages in each of the selected counties belong to their own county segment. It is to villages in this category that the ties of a county chief are strongest. Here old and new systems are in accord and the chief acts both as traditional lord of the segment as well as head of the Native Authority. Villages in their county segment appear to be more meticulous than others in such matters as discussing proposed changes of site with the county chief and in reporting important deaths to him. 621 631 634

The proportion of villages in each county belonging to other segments under Mpezeni varies from 5 per cent to 21 per cent. These are villages which chose, or were forced, to move away from the chief to whom they were attached in segmentary terms, or else villages belonging to major segments whose lords did not become chiefs. Villages in this category have ties that in certain situations, as when there is a serious quarrel, link them more closely with some other county than with their own. In any county where there are many villages of this kind the solidarity of the county as a social group is not great. The ruling chief has many rivals who seek to divide his county and to become chiefs themselves. We must distinguish here between villages in one county which belong to the segment of another and those interloping villages which belong to one county but are situated in the territory of another. We shall discuss interloping villages later (p. 128) in connexion with the territorial aspect of counties. [166]

In Nyasaland the history of administration has been separate from that of Northern Rhodesia, but the Ngoni population there also has divided itself on segmentary lines. For many years the two principal leaders recognized by the Administration have been the heads of segments 5 and 6, and these segments form the cores of the two counties they control. The two county chiefs are now Native Authorities and join with an adjacent Cewa chief to form the Fort Manning Council of Chiefs. This acts as the Native administrative body for the Fort Manning division of Lilongwe District. 643 648 634

The geographical distribution of the twelve counties, the neighbouring chiefdoms of other tribes, and the tracts of alienated land are shown in Map D. 631 634

The twelve county segments, ten in Northern Rhodesia and two in Nyasaland, are, in the nomenclature of Chapter I, segments 4 to 6 and 9 to 17. We shall refer to counties in the same way by the numbers of the segments corresponding to them. Thus county 4 is the county whose segment is number 4, and so on. County 10 is the Paramount Chief's county. Some of the county segments are primal, others are residual segments left after the formation of primal segments of lower order. The definition of the segment associated with each county is indicated in Table V. This table merely restates information implicit in Diagram 1. The hereditary names of county chiefs are also given.

[Text continues on page 121]

TABLE V. COUNTY SEGMENTS

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County[1]	*Specification of county segment*	*Hereditary name of county chief*
4	Residual after formation of segments 9 to 12	Madzimawe
5	Primal	Zulu
6	Primal	Mlonyeni
9	Primal	Mnukwa
10(*a*)	Residual after formation of segments 13 to 15	Mpezeni [643]
11	Residual after formation of segment 16	Misholo
12	Primal	Mshawa
13	Primal	Kapatamoyo
14	Residual after formation of segment 17	Nzermane
15	Primal	Sayili
16	Primal	Teleka (*b*)
17	Primal	Maguya

(*a*) Paramount Chief's county.

(*b*) The first chief of this county was known as Mlonyeni. He was succeeded by his brother, who kept his own name of Teleka. The similarity of name with the chief of segment 6 was accidental.

[1] [County numbers refer to map on page 120, category 116-Analyst]

The county segments are not all of the same order of segmentation, yet the counties occupy positions of equivalence in the Native Authority. Each of the eleven counties under minor chiefs is, or has been for most of the time, the area under the control of a Subordinate Native Authority and also the area of jurisdiction of [692] a second-class Native Court. According to the *Official Gazette* the [643] Paramount Chief's county appears not to have been under any Subordinate Native Authority, nor does it seem to have been provided with a second-class court, but in some respects action takes place as if there were such an authority and court. The Superior Native Authority is responsible for all ten counties in Northern Rhodesia and there is a first-class Native Court for the same area. Thus the structural alignment of the twelve counties is markedly different from that of the segments corresponding to them. In practice the relations existing between the twelve counties and

[Text continues on page 123]

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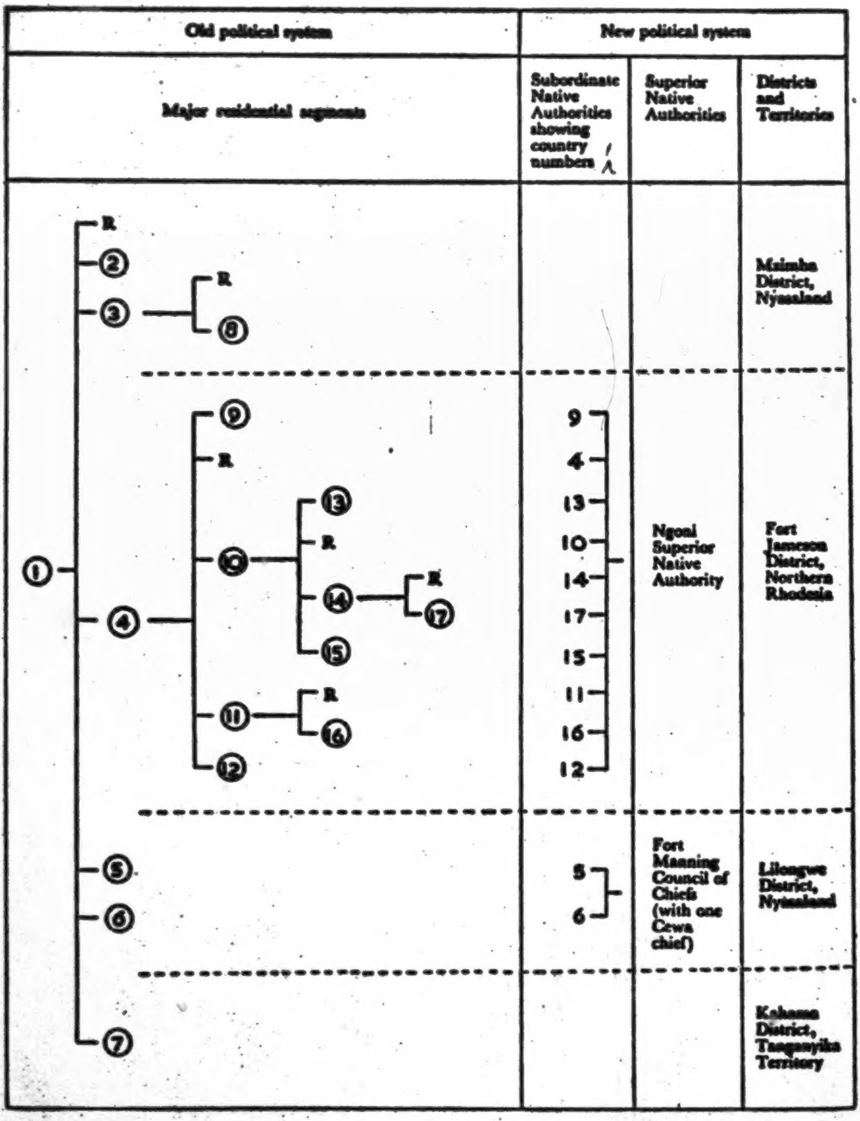
DIAGRAM 4. OLD AND NEW POLITICAL SYSTEMS RELATED


Old political system
New political system
Major residential segments
Subordinate Native Authorities showing country numbers ¹
Superior Native Authorities
Districts and Territories
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫ ⑬ ⑭ ⑮ ⑯ ⑰
R
Mzimba District, Nyasaland
9 4 13 10 14 17 15 11 16 12
Ngoni Superior Native Authority
Fort Jameson District, Northern Rhodesia
5 6
Fort Manning Council of Chiefs (with one Cewa chief)
Lilongwe District, Nyasaland
Kahama District, Tanganyika Territory

⑨ Residential segment, numbered as in Table II.

9 County.

R Residual segment.

¹[County numbers correspond to those on map on page 120 category 116.-Analyst]

[p. 122]

[The notes to this chart are on page 123.-Analyst]

between their leaders are influenced by both their relative position 621
in the Native Authority scheme and the position of the county seg- 631
ments, as well as by new interests that have emerged. The formal 634
relationship between the alignments of segments and counties is set out in Diagram 4. This diagram also shows the relationship, at a higher level, between some of the other independent Ngoni groups and the major political divisions of British Africa.

In each county the chief, who does not live in the capital but in a village of his own, is head of the county segment and it seems probable that during the early years of the Administration it was [648]
the affiliation of villages within their old residential segments that provided the basis for the groupings of convenience which eventually crystallized into counties. In one or two instances succession to headship of the segment and county has been plainly manipu- [557]
lated, but the traditional rules of succession have not been outraged. Where the county segment is a residual one, the county chief may be also head of some segment of higher order. Thus the chief of county 11 is head of primal segment 11 although his county is only the residual segment after the formation of segment 16; county chief 14 is head of primal segment 14; and the Paramount Chief is head of primal segments 4 and 10.

← 1

[1] Three Ngoni groups stemming from Zwangendaba are not shown on this 611
diagram. 621

(a) A group under Magodi separated itself from either segment 2 or 3 and 631
is now settled in Lundazi District, Northern Rhodesia.

(b) A group led by Zulu Gama is now settled in Songea District, Tanganyika Territory. The segment corresponding to this group appears to have been formed within segment 1, but I do not know what relation it bears to the other segments nor by what process it was formed. The western part of this group is still led by a descendant of Zulu Gama, but a descendant of one of his associates named Mboanani now leads the eastern part.

(c) A group under Ciwele ndhlovu is settled in Dowa District, Nyasaland. Some writers say it was formed within segment 4, others within the residue of segment 1. He was a lieutenant of either Zwangendaba or Mpezeni.

The two Ngoni groups which do not stem from Zwangendaba cannot be fitted into the diagram. They are located as follows.

(d) The Southern Nyasaland Ngoni, who broke away from the Southern Rhodesia Ndebele and who were led originally by Mputa, are now settled in Ncheu and Dedza Districts, Nyasaland, and in Circunscracão of Angónia, District of Tete, Portuguese East Africa.

(e) The Ngoni group led by Soshangane are now settled in the lower Limpopo Valley, Gazaland, Portuguese East Africa.

There are a few small Ngoni groups in the Shire Valley, Nyasaland, some of which have their own minor chiefs. There are also many Ngoni men and women in the towns of southern and eastern Africa, but they are not organized into political groups on a tribal basis.

1[These notes refer to the chart on page 122.—Analyst]

7. *Villages*

Throughout Ngoni history the village has been an easily 621
recognizable residential unit. Many of the pre-conquest villages,
particularly those which were headquarters of major segments,
were large clusters of huts with thousands of inhabitants. Although
there are none of comparable size to-day, the concept of the village
remains. The bulk of the present Ngoni rural population live in
discrete clusters of huts housing between fifty and two hundred
people. These we call villages. Each village is spatially distinct [861]
from the next, and generally is surrounded by garden land and bush.

The post of headman of a single village has never been very 622
important in the scheme of administration. Under the 1903 scheme,
district headmen were appointed in charge of groups of villages. 648
After 1916 this term was dropped in favour of minor chief, sub-
chief or headman of a group of villages. The men referred to by [634]
these names were the people who became county chiefs. Below
them no individuals were appointed as leaders of social groups.
From at least 1904 onwards there were men called district messengers 624
who carried ornamental spears as badges of office and who carried
out the instructions of the Native Commissioner. They had the 202
functions of policemen and messengers, although some of them [625]
were heads of villages in their own right. In 1916, the title of these
men was changed to divisional headmen, and they were described
as being heads of groups of villages. Nevertheless, at least among
the Ngoni, most divisional headmen continued to act merely as
messengers and police, and leadership of groups of villages con-
tinued to rest with the variously styled minor chiefs. After 1929
the work of divisional headmen was taken over partly by the
Native Authority messengers and partly by land messengers, who
are Government (Boma) messengers sent to live rurally from time
to time.

Yet although the office of village headman has not been of 621
Administrative significance, the village has always been an impor- 648
tant social group. We have seen that even in pre-conquest times, 178
when the State as a whole was much more concentrated spatially
than it is now, the fact of common residence was of significance
within the segmentary residential system. The village had a
central cattle byre. Its headman was known by a special term and [622]
once a primal segment had grown to village size the segment name
was not applied to any residual segment within the headquarters
village. The policy of the Administration, combined with a change
in kinship relations among the tribe (a change from the quasi- [601]

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621 agnation of the small segments to what I have termed an omni-
648 directional system), has increased the importance of the single
[601] village. After 1898 the Administration endeavoured to bring the people back into villages of moderate size which could be easily supervised by the Administration acting through chiefs.[22] In 1912 a comprehensive scheme of Native reserves was proposed. To facilitate the introduction of the scheme, many small villages were amalgamated with others near by to form units of forty huts or more. The larger groups of composite villages were to form the nuclei of the reserves.[23] After 1930, when villages began to spread out again, many of the enforced amalgamations came to an end. The Administrative rules that every man must live in a recognized village and that a village with less than ten tax-paying men could not be recognized were not always enforced, although they were not repealed until 1945. Administrative recognition has been an important consideration in determining the size of villages but it has not been the only one.

621 In the residential system, the process of segmentation did not
631 stop with the founding of the segments we now know as county
178 segments. Already in 1898 there were very many more segments in being than the few we have shown in Diagram 1. There we have indicated the position of the major branches of the tree of State but have omitted the hundreds of minor limbs and thousands of twigs which made up the whole. Even if we restrict our attention to segments founded before 1898 we find within any county segment to-day many smaller groups, some of them divisions, others single villages, and a few containing several villages, which are in fact inferior segments formed by one or other of the processes we discussed in Chapter I. Lieutenants and others have made their own segments, junior sons have left their natal villages, and so on. The processes of segment formation since 1898 have not been identical with those prevailing before the conquest, for the quasi-agnatic structure of segments has been modified and segments of recent formation, if in fact we can legitimately call them segments at all, are not organized in the same hierarchical manner as in the old residential system. We shall discuss the formation of small social groups in a later part of our study, the analysis of village life.
178 Here, at the county level, we have to deal with what is essentially a
634 continuation of a pre-conquest process. Each successive head of a
county segment, i.e. each county chief, has formed his own new
622 segment within that of his predecessor. Thus, for instance, where

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[22] *Reports on the Administration*, 1902, p. 2, and 1903, p. 2.
[23] *M.R.A.*, p. 108.

Apart from the fact that the head of the segment is, or once
622 was, a member of the royal lineage, there is little difference between
631 a cadet segment and a commoner one. The majority of segments
643 in the system as a whole have been founded by commoners and the
621 majority of extant villages are the headquarters of commoner
segments. Before the conquest, one of the principal mechanisms
for ensuring the spatial dispersal of an expanding population was the
[361] formation of new large villages, the headquarters of segments
[168] formed for bevies of queens. After the conquest a comparatively
stationary population has dispersed not under the leadership of
queens but by the formation of new segments by commoners, not
all of them even lieutenants of their lords.

Some indication of the distribution of present-day villages
175 among these various types is given in Table VII. This table is based
621 on 82 village histories collected in the general course of fieldwork.
631 The villages were selected casually and arbitrarily, without reference
to this particular problem. I also collected the histories of several counties, in the course of which I became acquainted with other village histories. I have excluded these from the sample to avoid weighing it too heavily with capital and chief's villages, whose names are mentioned in county histories. In consequence, the sample contains no chief's village at all. It also contains too few villages that have come into Ngoniland from other tribal areas, as can be seen by comparing it with Table IV (p. 118). Nevertheless it should serve to show the rough orders of magnitude.

It will be seen that about four out of five at the present time are commoner villages, and that about half of these were already in existence as distinct villages in 1898. On the other hand, seven out of the nine royal villages in the sample were founded before 1898.

Apart from the six incoming villages and the two founded by a labour immigrant and Administrative action, all the villages in the sample have some segment of the old residential system, or its modern equivalent, as their core. Most of the commoner villages have been formed by the differentiation of a quasi-relative, cognatic or affinal relative from his lord. By contrast, most royal villages have been formed by differentiation between bevies of co-wives or between sons and their fathers.

In pre-conquest times there was a dogma that the chief owned
[422] all the cattle in the tribe. This dogma related to the structural
[231] position of the chief as head of the highest segment, and therefore in
authority over the State and its resources rather than to the day-to-day care and disposal of cattle. There were cattle in each village

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and village headmen looked after them. About half the cattle in Ngoniland were captured during the fighting of 1898 and although many of these were returned to the Ngoni, they were soon disposed of to White traders. To-day, many of the cattle in royal (i.e. capital, regal and chief's) villages are said to belong to the Paramount Chief. This statement of royal ownership is now not merely one referring to political overlordship, for these beasts are contrasted with others which belong to commoners and to other chiefs

TABLE VII. VILLAGES FOUNDED BEFORE AND AFTER 1898

How founded or incorporated in the Ngoni State	*Type of present-day village*					
	Royal			*Cadet*	*Commoner*	*Total*
	Capital	*Regal*	*Chief's*			
Founded by regional governors or their ancestors prior to creation of the Ngoni State	0	0	0	0	3	3
Founded before 1898 to accommodate other segments of the residential system	1	6	0	1	25	33
Total known to have been founded before 1898	1	6	0	1	28	36
Founded to accommodate segments of the residential system, date unknown	0	0	0	1	11	12
Founded after 1898 to accommodate segments of the residential system or their modern equivalents	0	2	0	4	20	26
Founded outside the Ngoni State, date unknown, entering it after 1898	0	0	0	0	6	6
Founded in Ngoniland by a labour immigrant after 1898	0	0	0	0	1	1
Founded by direct Administrative action after 1898	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total known to have been founded or incorporated after 1898	0	2	0	4	28	34
Grand total	1	8	0	6	67	82

Sample collected casually in the general course of fieldwork.

175 and members of the royal lineage. Nevertheless, the care and
631 disposal of these royal cattle is the responsibility of the head of each
● 621 village where they are kept. If the Paramount Chief visits the
472 village, and a beast is killed in his honour, it is the Paramount Chief
221 who is praised as the owner of the beast. The nearer the village
[643] concerned to the Paramount Chief, geographically, in terms of
segments, and in terms of counties, the more the man in charge of
the cattle should refer to the Paramount Chief before killing one of
them, or to report a loss by leopards or hyenas. A few years ago the
son of the first lieutenant in a regal village in the Paramount Chief's
county removed some royal cattle to another tribal area where he
had kinsmen. When this was discovered the matter was discussed
[685] by the senior lieutenants of the Paramount Chief's county at his
village, and the lieutenant and his son were ordered to be banished.
A new man was made first lieutenant in the regal village. In this
instance, the lieutenant showed plainly that he was not using the
cattle in the interests of the chieftainship. Had his village been
farther away from the Paramount Chief, or had his use of the cattle
been less obviously merely to his own advantage, it is unlikely that
such severe reprisals would have been taken.

These cattle do still provide a visible sign of the connexion
[643] between the headquarters of the various segments and the Paramount Chief, and they still provide the first lieutenants of the royal village with wealth which they can use at their discretion to further the interests of the chieftainship. The structural relationship between the Paramount Chief and his subordinates in the old segmentary system is still partly mediated through cattle.

In the old residential system each segment, however small,
631 contained within itself the seeds of an independent State, for there
621 was no inherent restriction on its growth. When the imposition of
648 British rule modified this system, the effect of the ossification of the
system at the top was to prevent further splits in the State. The relationship between the major segments which became counties was defined, or rather was redefined, in perpetuity within the bounds of a single Superior Native Authority. However, below the level of these segments no such process of definition took place. A county, in Administrative terms, consisted of so many villages, not of a system of nesting segments. The Administration did not perpetuate these lesser segments by adapting them to its own scheme, and inter-village and intra-county relations were largely left to find their own configuration. This has had three distinct results.

Firstly, present relations between pairs of villages are still
628 621 formulated in traditional terms and in part still arise as a result of

the same processes we have seen at work in the formation of segments. 628
Those villages are linked which have a common origin, 621
and the mechanism of dispersal is still the same as in pre-conquest
times. Sons of a headman still break out of their natal village and
lieutenants and others move off to make their own villages. However, [178]
with the decline in polygyny, fewer new villages arise from [595]
the formation of new bands of wives by a headman.

Secondly, the village has become more important than before, 621
and village membership is now critical in a wide variety of situations.
Thirdly, because it has become easier to move from one village to 178
another than to form a new village, the genealogical structure of the village has become highly diversified as compared with segments of similar size in the old system.

Thus, the transition has been from a State based on a continuously 178
segmenting political system to a minor unit of administration
in a modern State. The new order has grown out of the old, 64
not as the result of any professed policy of preserving indigenous forms of political organization, but because the aims of the Administration were essentially conservative, because it was concerned with preserving order in the country as cheaply as possible and did not wish to introduce economic and political changes which would conflict with the supply of labour to other areas scheduled for earlier development; and because for the most part those individuals who occupied powerful positions in the old régime were best able to survive in the struggle for power which determined the eventual form of the new. Therefore, although their entry into the colonial empire was so much more abrupt than that of their matrilineal neighbours, the political system to which Ngoni are now subject bears many more superficial similarities to its former condition than is the case among the Cewa and others. The changes have been great, as we have seen, but the symbols and names remain, with changed significance, to remind Ngoni of their past.

647 in the political organization. Some of these officials were also members of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, but many were not. The officials served the Paramount in his court and his administration, and also the chiefs, and formed the lines of communication between them. 647 This created a network of relationships between the Paramount and the 621 chiefs at the top level, and between the chiefs and the village headmen under them at the lower level. From this network were excluded, in the northern kingdom, all the *alumuzana* and, in the central kingdom, all those *alumuzana* who were not chiefs. In the two kingdoms the *alumuzana* exercised unofficial control over a varying number of villages, and were inclined to assert their social superiority because they were excluded from official recognition.

The foundations of the political structure within which the ruling 571 aristocracy operated were a series of related institutions which will be 171 described and analysed later in the book, but which must be referred to 178 here, partly in order to explain the terminology used. The South-eastern Bantu, whose culture the Ngoni brought with them, had an institution in all important villages known as 'houses', which was a grouping of huts and of the wives owning them round the hut of one or more of the leading women. This institution, with its variations among the southern and northern Nguni people, was described by Mrs. Hoernlé in the chapter on 'Social Organization' in *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*.[1] The Ngoni institution of houses had developed from the basic pattern among the South-eastern Bantu into an independent form. In the first place it was only found in relation to the Paramount, the chiefs and leading men of the royal clan, and the *alumuzana*. It did not, as in South Africa, form the basic pattern of all villages in the Ngoni kingdoms. ●[621] Where, as in most villages owned by *alumuzana*, mixed ethnic groups lived together, the house system existed only for the head of the clan, his brothers and his successor. It was specifically an Ngoni institution in the cultural and social sense. In the second place, the terms 'right-hand' and 'left-hand' house, common among the South-eastern Bantu, were not used by the Ngoni in the 1930's. The two terms they used were the 'big house' and the '*gogo* house', and I propose to use these terms here. The principle behind the use of these terms was that the big house was the one from which the heir should come to succeed the Paramount, the chief, or the *mulumuzana*. The *gogo* house was the one which was responsible for maintaining tradition and performing ritual.

621 Another institution, closely related to that of the houses, was the 571 *lusungulu* and *gogo* villages. The Paramounts, the chiefs, and the leading *alumuzana*, when they succeeded their father after his death, moved out of his village and made their own new village, or took their households

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[1] Schapera, I. (ed.). *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa.* Routledge, 1937, chap. IV.

and settled where another village already existed.[1] In both forms, this 621
new settlement was called the *lusungulu* village, 'the one which goes in 571
front'; and the village which was left was known as the *gogo* village.
This use of the term *gogo* (literally 'grandparent') for house and village had a common basic connotation. It expressed the concept of being left behind to look after something, the *gogo* house being passed over for the heir to the Paramountcy or chieftainship but charged with ritual and ceremonial duties; and the *gogo* village being left behind to take care of the traditions and generally also of most of the widows of the deceased Paramount or chief. Each *lusungulu* village eventually divided on the death of its owner, part 'going forward' with the new successor, part remaining behind. The main groups in the village which went ahead or which remained were the houses connected with the new Paramount or chief or *mulumuzana* and those connected with his dead father. In the chapter on houses (Chapter III, Part III) this process will be examined in greater detail.

The third related institution was the provision for guarding the spirit 769
of a dead Paramount or chief and those of some leading *alumuzana*. A 554
senior woman was always guardian of such a spirit and in her hut were 775
kept the ritual objects: spear, wooden dish, baskets, fire-stick, which
were used in sacrifices to the ancestors. The guardianship of the spirit
of a dead Paramount was always associated with the village which had
been his *lusungulu*. His corpse was buried on the edge of the kraal con- [766]
taining the cattle of the house where he had grown up, and this village became the *gogo* village associated with him, where his spirit was guarded in a hut, probably though not necessarily belonging to one of his widows. The recognition of such a woman guardian was a matter for selection and appointment, and was the responsibility of the senior men of the *gogo* house in that village in consultation with the senior men of the *gogo* house in the dead man's father's village. The concept of guarding the spirits of important men, and the means by which such guardianship was practised, will be more fully discussed in Part IV in connexion with the ancestor cult.

THE NGONI KINGDOMS AND AFRICAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

In the final section of this chapter we shall look at the Ngoni king- 121
doms in their relationship to other African kingdoms and states such as those described in *African Political Systems*.[2] A methodological problem arises here. In this study a number of references are made to the Ngoni kingdoms in pre-European times, especially in connexion

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[1] This form of the institution was found in densely populated areas and the incoming households dominated the original ones.

[2] Fortes, M., & Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (ed.). *African Political Systems*. O.U.P., 1940 pp. 8-23.

CHAPTER III

NGONI CULTURE

563 AMONG the mixed ethnic elements in the Ngoni kingdoms the ruling
aristocracy were those whose ancestors were of Swazi and trans-Zambesi
origin, and whose clan descent names established them as belonging to
563 the true Ngoni group. The families with these clan names formed also
●621 a social aristocracy in the villages where they lived, in the areas of the
chiefs and *alumuzana*, and in the Ngoni kingdoms. This social status,
established primarily by the clan name, was visible in the position of the
huts in the village, arranged at the head of the kraal; in the leading role
played by the senior members of these families on all ceremonial occasions;
and in the practice of a number of customs which were defined as
128 Ngoni. Ngoni culture, as seen in social and ritual life, was a series of
interwoven patterns of social organization and social behaviour. We
shall outline these patterns here in order to bring together many of the
forms and practices described in the rest of the book. In a more homogeneous
society it would have been possible to find in these patterns a
[184] consistent and clearly defined culture. Yet one of the main problems in
studying Ngoni culture in the 1930's was that there were many variations
121 of each pattern and the anthropologist was all the time trying to find out
what degree of cultural conformity existed among the Ngoni aristocracy.
Of the different aspects of culture reviewed in this chapter, the ritual
563 pattern was the one most consistently followed, and it was the one in
which the Ngoni social aristocracy most clearly demonstrated that they
had a distinctive common culture which was found in both kingdoms
and in the secession states.

(*a*) *Kinship pattern*

611 Like the South-eastern Bantu from whom they came the Ngoni were
patrilineal in descent and inheritance. Marriage was negotiated by go-
583 betweens and concluded through the handing over of cattle, and the
term *lobola* was used for the cattle exchanged in this form of marriage.
An Ngoni woman married by this form was known as *mlobokazi*. A
593 strict interpretation in the courts was given to this form of marriage as
it affected the ownership and custody of the children. The children of
[586] a *lobola* marriage contract belonged to their father and could be claimed
by him if the marriage broke up, or on the death of their mother.
591 Traditionally, virilocal residence was an Ngoni custom, and it was supported
by the house system whereby the male members of each house
[592] formed a group with economic interests in common through the joint
ownership of the cattle in the name of the house. A widespread variant

A widespread variant

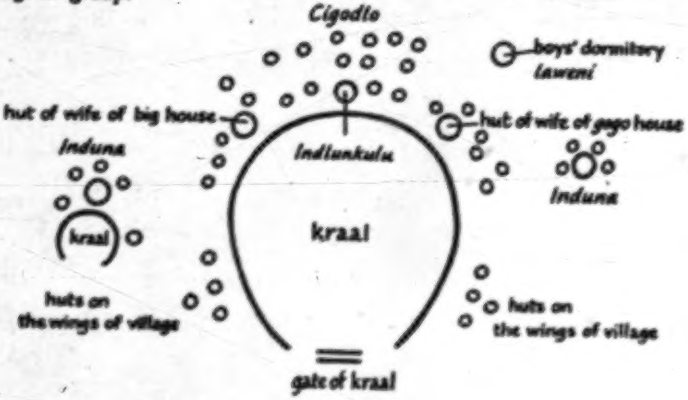
^ on virilocal residence will be discussed later and illustrated in Chapter IV of Part III. 591

(*b*) *Village pattern*

There was a traditional pattern of Ngoni village organization, which 621 consisted in the siting of the huts in the village and the corresponding social groups formed in the different sections. Informants made it clear that when the Ngoni first settled in the areas where the two kingdoms now exist, the royal villages and the chiefs' villages were very large. Segmentation of these large villages, not only by the *lusungulu* 'going out' as already described, but also by sections of the village breaking off, began before the Europeans came and continued after their arrival. In the 1930's the traditional pattern was sometimes altered by a desire to build a 'model village' laid out in lines instead of in a horse-shoe curve round the kraal. Even in some of these model villages the grouping of huts, though no longer in a series of circles, indicated the house affiliation of their owners and their relationship to the head of the village.

The traditional ground-plan of an Ngoni village was based on the main kraal which occupied the centre. The gate of the kraal was on the [417] open end of the horse-shoe formation, and the most important hut, the *indlunkulu*, was at the top of the kraal. On either side of the *indlunkulu* were grouped the huts belonging to the houses associated with the wives of the owner of the village. Behind the *indlunkulu* were the huts of his married sons and those of his brothers who chose to live with him, and this group of huts, known as *cigodlo*, spread round behind the main huts of the owners of houses. Behind each house-group of huts were the huts of the *induna* associated with the house; in large villages he often had a kraal and reproduced a similar small village plan in his own circle of huts. On the wings of the village, curving towards the gate of the kraal and called by the Ngoni 'the horns of the village', were the less important families in the village. The general principle of the village plan in [554] terms of social status and the siting of huts was that the nearer huts were to the *indlunkulu* the higher was the prestige of their owner. The following very much simplified plan of an Ngoni village illustrates the principle of siting the huts in relation to social grouping, as it was when a new *lusungulu* village was set up. In this plan the *indlunkulu* hut was owned by the mother of the owner of the village, one of his father's widows who moved out with him. When she died the big wife on her right might move into the actual *indlunkulu* hut, or stay in her own hut while another widow of her father-in-law entered the *indlunkulu*. There was no invariable rule for this type of succession, but there were only these two possible alternatives. Reference should be made here to one other hut site—that of the *laweni* or boys' dormitory. It was usually sited behind either the big house or the *gogo* house, far enough behind

621 the main circle round the kraal to emphasize its connexion with the *cigodlo* group.



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The group referred to as 'a house' has already been defined in its relation to the Paramount and his *lusungulu* village, and it will be illustrated and examined further in Chapter III of Part III. As an Ngoni institution the big house was an integral factor in the succession to high office, and the *gogo* house played an essential role in ceremonial and ritual life. Houses were also one of the most important components in village grouping. Men, women and children regarded themselves as associated with a house in one of three ways. They were related to it by descent or by marriage; or they were members of the family of the *induna* who looked after its affairs; or they served the house as servants or labourers, and were possibly the descendants of captives caught in war and assigned to that house. Thus it often happened that the people living on the wings of the village had some relationship to the house on the side of the kraal where their huts were sited. There were many Ngoni villages where all the inhabitants were said to belong to one of the two or three or more houses, even though the majority of the inhabitants had no kinship or official relationship with a house.

614 The term 'clan' or 'clan descent group' has been used already many times and some explanation and definition is needed as a guide to its use in Part II before it is discussed further in Chapter II of Part III. The Ngoni considered that the clan of a person was of great importance for several reasons. The use of the clan descent name was the normal mode
[576] of address between all adults. The Ngoni said they could not speak to any stranger until they knew his clan name, and they used it in all social intercourse, except when addressing the Paramount. Exogamy was strict for people with the same clan name, and sexual relations between such
[835] individuals was regarded as incest.

The three final acts of the *mtimba* were performed for the new wife 585 by the women of her new village. The first took place about two days 182 after the end of the main ceremony and was the occasion for her instruction by her husband's relatives. She sat on a mat by the *indlunkulu*, 621 while the woman of that house dressed her *isihlutu*, anointed her with oil, and clothed her in fresh skins and new beads taken from the store of the house to which she now belonged. They then instructed her in her behaviour to old and young, telling her to avoid selfishness and quarrelling and to be friendly with everyone.

The second act, called *ukufumisa umlobokazi* ((bringing the wife out), took place thirty to forty days later, during which time the wife had been sitting by her hut being watched. All this time she had eaten only a little food, sent to her from her mother-in-law's hut, had been afraid to speak to anyone, and had wept often. Now she was told that she might go anywhere and talk with anyone. She could help her mother-in-law by fetching firewood and by lighting her fire. A pot of water was given to her and an axe to cut firewood, and her mother-in-law gave her the *indlekuza* bead, a sign that she might speak and eat in front of her parents-in-law. But her testing time was not yet over. She was told to fetch a huge bundle of split wood and to lay it down carefully before her mother-in-law's hut without dropping any. As the bundle was on [482] her head, it meant kneeling down and bending forward slowly until she could gently ease the wood on to the ground. Other tests included stripping large quantities of maize, soaking them, and pounding them [252] into stamped maize (*izinkobe*). This testing was called *ukulinga umlobokazi* (watching the new wife), and was in most cases far more exacting than anything she had been made to do in her own home.

The culminating act of the integration process, *ukupekisa umlobokazi*, in which the new wife's hut was recognized as the starting-point of a new house, was the ceremony of making fire in her new hut to cook food for her husband. Two or three months after the marriage, a woman from her father-in-law's *gogo* house suddenly appeared in the doorway of the new wife's hut, carrying three hearth-stones. She fetched fire, kindled it, and began to cook boiled maize. The astonished young wife was expected to cry because she had now been turned away from her mother-in-law's cooking-place, as if she were being put out of the house. The maize cooked on this first fire in the new hut was regarded as having been cooked by the bride, and was divided into portions, one being taken to each section of the village attached to a house. Meanwhile the young wife sat nearby, hanging her head and showing the conventional signs of grief. Nevertheless she was so excited that she went back to her own home as soon as possible to tell them the news. The response of her own people was to prepare food for a feast and bring it to her new village to express to her husband's people their appreciation of this token of confidence in the girl's ability to cook for her husband.

182 585 621 The prolonged series of interviews, exchanges and ceremonies emphasized the Ngoni conception of the marriage contract and its binding nature. They also underlined the severance of the new wife from her former family and house, and her gradual assimilation into her mother-in-law's house. This relationship between Ngoni women within the houses provided an effective means of integrating them into a village to which they were strangers.

CHAPTER IV

NGONI FAMILY STRUCTURE

183 59 'THE Ngoni have power and authority over their women and their children.' So began one of the texts on *cingoni*, 'the thing that is Ngoni', by a man of the Ntumba people whose grandfather had been born among the Ngoni when they were in Songea. There was a recognized ideal pattern of an Ngoni family which covered both the individuals included in the family group and the place where they lived. This pattern was patrilineal in descent, virilocal in residence, polygynous in marriage for all men of standing who were not Christians. Other recognized and often-mentioned characteristics were the continued residence of widows in their husband's village after his death, the grouping of families by houses, and the *laweni*, or dormitory system for boys and unmarried young men.

581 593 The young wife wept on the day of her marriage because she was leaving the security and known relationships of her own family for the hazards and uncertainty of entering as a stranger into her husband's family group. The dramatization of these sentiments in the protracted marriage ceremony, and the allusions in the *mtimba* songs, brought out clearly the continuity of the man's relations with all members of his family and the sudden sharp break in the woman's relationship when she married. When her first child was born, and a new individual family group launched, her final integration into her husband's family began. As a mother who had borne a grandchild to her husband's parents she had thenceforward a direct part in the relationships within her husband's family, but as a wife she was always a stranger. The marriage negotiations and ceremonial express the closeness of the family ties, showing on the girl's side the anxiety of her family on parting with her to live among strangers; and on the man's side the hesitancy of the husband's family at taking into their midst an unknown and untried stranger. In addition, the protracted exchanges of cattle and feasts, delaying the final ceremony and building up relationships between the two family groups, illustrate the Ngoni attitude towards marriage as a

binding contract. In theory at least the girl left her family for good once 581
the agreed *lobola* was handed over, and the responsibility for adjustment 593
to the family she had entered was hers, first as wife and then as mother.

Investigation of the terminology associated with the Ngoni concept 593
of family immediately poses problems of relating group structure to 171
individual and group relationships. Dr. Kuper did not refer to any single term for family among the Swazi. The nearest was the term *umuti* used for homestead[1] which covered a recognized leader and his dependents, in terms of common residence, mutual relations and economic activities. The Cewa term *banja*,[2] widely used in Nyasaland in the 1930's to translate 'family', in its general use was more akin to the Swazi *umuti* since it denoted the relationships of a group of people to one man, and their common residence in a single village or a section of a village. *Banja* was used to express relationship to one man by kinship and marriage, but when it was used among the central Ngoni it also applied to other individuals, such as his age mates and the descendants of his father's former captives who lived in the same village. Another Cewa term *mbumba* was used in two distinct senses. The common use was to express the relationship of one man with his sisters and their children who inherited his position and his property and looked to him for assistance. A much less common use of the term was found sometimes in central Nyasaland and occasionally in north Nyasaland to cover the group of a man and his children and his brothers and their children—a patrilineal concept of a kinship group which was usually but not always associated with common residence.

There was one major difference between the Ngoni concept inherent 171
in their use of *banja* and that of the Cewa and other matrilineal peoples. 768
When an important man or woman died among the Cewa, someone 602
always 'entered their place' in the kinship system, and this acquiring of 593
a new position involved a shift in actual relationships and in terminology throughout the group of kin. There was no such change among the Ngoni in the use of kinship terms. When a man or woman among the Ngoni entered a dead person's place it was in order to perform his functions and not to assume the dead person's kinship relationships.

The village lay-out in different types of Ngoni village illustrates the 621
way in which family grouping could be recognized in the sharing of the 593
same hut, in the grouping of huts, and in the relations with neighbouring villages. Later in this chapter illustrations will be given from the northern and central Ngoni kingdoms to show how certain patterns of residential grouping on a family basis were evolving from the divisions of mixed tribal groups characteristic of the former large villages of pre-European days. The general tendency in northern Ngoniland was to

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[1] op. cit. p. 36.

[2] Scott and Hetherwick in their dictionary translate *banja*: house, home, household, family.

● 621 break up into smaller villages, and there were on the whole more villages 593 in the north said to be *wabanja limodzi* (of one family) than among the central Ngoni. On the other hand, the *lusungulu* pattern of village division had almost disappeared among the central Ngoni.

591 A man on his first marriage built a hut for his wife behind his 592 mother's hut, where his brothers by the same mother or by mothers of the same house also built. The family grouping by residence was there- [361] fore determined by house affiliation. Associated with this residential group based on kinship, there were the residences of the *induna* and his family which had separate alignments on a kinship basis, though for certain common purposes they combined with the family groups related to the house by kinship. The children of the families belonging to the house and the children of the *induna* who took care of it began to intermarry when the prohibitions on marriage within the village ceased to operate. In this way kinship bonds were created within a group which formerly had only residence and certain activities in common, and this process was recognizable in a number of the larger villages, especially in the central kingdom.

593 Within the different types of family groups determined by their residential basis there were certain outstanding relationships between members of the same family. The most important of these was that between father and children; the father, as the biological parent and also the symbol of authority, was the focus of honour and respect, and the one who helped his children when they were in need. The relation between the father and his children among the Ngoni was always a balance between affection and care, and respect and authority. The ideal pattern of a father, as described by informants, included all these elements and also wisdom. This concept of the father relationship was extended to the head of a *banja*, to the headman of a village or a section of a village, to a *mulumuzana* in charge of an area, to a chief, and to the [572] Paramount himself. The Ngoni greeting to all older men, and the most respectful form of address to a man of any seniority, was *baba*, father, or its Nyanja equivalent *bambo*.

The mother, on the other hand, had a more limited relationship within the family circle. To her own children and to the children of her co-wives, especially of her house, she was the provider of food, and the affectionate 'cherisher'[1] of young children; but she was also treated with respect and, when she reached some seniority, she had considerable authority over her daughters and her younger co-wives. She could never compete, however, with the sisters of her husband or with his mothers, who expected to exercise authority over her children and to [591 arrange for the ceremonies connected with birth, puberty, and marriage. 184] In villages where virilocal residence was the rule, the husband's sisters were married elsewhere and were only present in the village during

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[1] *Kulera*, lit. to cherish, is the word used for bringing up children.

Households[1]

592
614
622
631

	Total	Leading clan
Northern Ngoniland		
Eswazini	23	15
Endindeni	15	12
Eluhangeni	37	21
Central Ngoniland		
Cinkwita	39	18
Mangozo	60	26
Mcakhatha	122	37

The proportion of persons of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans in the [563
central kingdom to the total population was lower than in the north. 565]
The figures given here, however, do not show the total number of persons of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, but only the households related on a kinship basis with the leading clan head.

Eswazini and Endindeni were both built in traditional Ngoni style in [361]
horse-shoe formation round a single kraal, with the *indlunkulu* at the
head of the kraal, and a recognized right-hand and left-hand grouping. 184
Eswazini had become the head village of the Sibande clan since its 592
owner, Samson Sibande, on his father's death had gone out from his 621
father's village and made this his *lusungulu* village. His big wife, of the royal clan, was in the *indlunkulu* to which she had succeeded on the death of his mother, and there was another wife on the right and left hand. Of the older generation there was only one widow of his father, belonging to the same house as his mother. Of his generation there were five brothers, one of the same mother as Samson, and four sons of the surviving widow of his father. There was also the widow of a dead brother by the same mother. Two sisters of Samson were in the village, one married to the *induna* of his mother's house, whose family lived on the right-hand side of the kraal, and one a deserted widow who had returned to her brother's protection. All the village was one house, that of Samson's own mother.

Endindeni was a *gogo* village owned by Zibekere Makwakwa who was the son of a famous war *induna* and was of the *gogo* house of his father. His brother, who was the son of the big house, had moved out to his own village. The village was composed entirely of his family with the exception of an age mate with whom he had an *ubale* relationship, who lived with his two wives on the left-hand side of the kraal. Zibekere's big wife was in the *indlunkulu* to which she had succeeded on the death of his own mother, and his second wife was also of her house. Of the older generation there was one widow of his father, and one widow of his father's brother; of his own generation, one younger brother of the same mother. There were four sons of his big wife and two of his second

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[1] In all six villages the total number of households included two or more *lawesi*.

184 wife. The village with its single kraal was 'of one house', and it was 592 widely known as a good village by Ngoni standards, because, as the 621 local people said, 'all the men are Makwakwa men'.

Eluhangeni was a *gogo* village where the spirit of Mtenje Jere, the son of a brother of Zwangendaba, was guarded. The kinship group of Mwanamdoko Jere, the owner of the village, were all of one house, that of his mother who was dead. Her place in the *indlunkulu* had been taken by his big wife who also inherited the guardianship of the spirit of Mtenje. There was one widow of his father in the village, but she had become a Christian and therefore could not guard the spirit. Mwanamdoko had two wives, and three widows of his brothers by the same mother were also in the village. One brother by another mother was the only one of his generation still alive and he had two sons and two grandsons living in the *cigodlo* behind the *indlunkulu*. All Mwanamdoko's family were grouped round one kraal. There were two other kraals with family groups round them in the village, one belonging to the *induna* of his dead mother, and one to an age mate who had been in his regiment. The *induna's* group belonged to the same house as Mwanamdoko, but the pattern of the three distinct groups each with its own kraal was more like that of the *banja* in the central kingdom.

184 In the central kingdom the relationships of the various groups in a village followed a different pattern from that in the north. Instead of 563 the *lunungulu* and *gogo* characteristics where the family groups were 592 integrated into houses, the southern pattern was that of a conquered 621 village with the Ngoni element superimposed. In Cinkwita and in Mcakhatha the village headman and his family group had originally been conquered, then established as an outlying village, and finally chosen for the permanent settlement of a family group belonging to an [361] Ngoni clan when they left the royal village after it broke up. In Cinkwita there were three kraals associated with three *banja*. Two of the *banja* belonged to kinship groups of Ntumba clans, and the head of one was known as the headman of the village. The head of the *banja* of Cinkwita Ndau, the Ngoni clan group, was his eldest son Wilkinson, whose wife was of a leading Swazi clan, the Magwagwa. His family group consisted of his wife, two sons and three daughters; a brother and his two daughters; the widow of a dead brother and his two sons and a daughter; three sisters, one of whom had married the brother of the village headman and one who was a widow; and a widowed sister of his father. This family grouping expressed in terms of households illustrates what has already been referred to several times, namely the tendency of the heads of leading Ngoni families in the central kingdom to keep, in addition to their sons, their sisters and daughters in the village after marriage, even when *lobola* had been given. It also illustrates the comparatively small number of plural marriages in the south among the younger men.

184 592 621 [614]

Mangozo, as its name suggests, was the head village of the Ngozo clan. It had been originally settled by Ngwazi Ngozo who brought with him two family groups of Ntumba clans who had been with him in Songea. These two Ntumba family groups each formed a *banja*, and one had a kraal. The other two *banja* belonged to two elderly Ngozo brothers, sons of Ngwazi and of the same house, who had one kraal between them. The senior of these, Mbiri Ngozo, had in his *banja* a widow of his father, not his own mother, and nine widows of a dead older brother; his own wife, two sons, two daughters, three grandsons and three granddaughters; and his sister. The *banja* of Cinyama Ngozo included two widows of another brother; his own wife, two sons, two daughters, one grandson and one granddaughter. The two brothers between them had to support eleven widows of dead brothers.

[614]

Mcakhatha had a dual foundation. The village site was originally one of the outlying villages of the section known as Ziyembe. It was also the head village of the Nzunga clan. Three of the five *banja* into which the village was divided belonged to Ntumba family groups, and the head of one of these was known as the headman of the village. Of the two *banja* belonging to the Nzunga clan, one was a *gogo banja*, the other that of the ruling chief who was a Sub-Native Authority.[1] Within the *gogo banja* was the house of Bambo Manga in whose hut the spirit of Mputa was guarded. Two other houses in the *gogo banja* were associated with the guardianship of the spirits of the grandfather and father of the ruling chief. There was therefore a house and a *banja* formation existing together, in which the *banja* predominated. The two Nzunga *banja* consisted of two family groups, one associated with the ruling chief and one with his paternal uncle in charge of the *gogo* section. The chief's *banja* included his own five wives, one sister and two brothers by the same mother, and two sisters and four brothers by other mothers. The *banja* of the head of the *gogo* section included his own five wives and two widows whom he had inherited from the former chief, his older brother; three brothers and two sisters by other mothers; three of his sons. It also included a widow of his father, and nine widows of his dead brother who had not been inherited; and the households of Bambo Manga and her daughter and granddaughter for whom the father of the ruling chief had assumed responsibility. The Ngoni family pattern of this village was more complex than that of Cinkwita or Mangozo because of the clearly marked *gogo* section existing alongside that of the ruling chief. It showed, however, the general characteristics of Ngoni family grouping in the central kingdom, keeping sisters and daughters in the village after marriage while retaining responsibility for widows of fathers and brothers. There were three Nzunga kraals, two in the *gogo banja* and one in the chief's *banja*, but the cattle were always referred to

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[1] In northern Ngoniland the ruling chief would have moved out of this village on his father's death, leaving the *gogo banja* as the *gogo* village.

184 592 621 as belonging to the houses. The relatively large number of cattle and the high ranking of the Nzunga clan accounted for the number of *lobola* marriages.

Family structure in individual and group life

554 565 614 621 [557] As individuals and in family groups members of leading Ngoni clans claimed and exercised leadership in their villages. The leading families in the area of a *mulumuzana* owning a head village, and the small Ngoni family groups in a larger non-Ngoni setting, all expected and received 'honour' (*ulemu*). The tendency in the central kingdom to marry up, and in the northern kingdom to marry into the clan of the mother if it were a high-ranking one, emphasized the importance attached to the rank and prestige of certain clans. This attitude towards family prestige was more noticeable in the central kingdom where individuals were quick to announce who was their mother or wife if that information would enhance their reputation.

The leadership of high-ranking families was not only a matter of claiming prestige. It carried with it, on the male and the female side, responsibility for regulating the affairs of the village and the house and the *banja*. Quarrels had to be composed, if possible before they came to court, troubles over deserted wives looked into, provision made for hospitality and for keeping the village premises in order. Informants emphasized again and again that in Ngoni villages where many men and women were of Swazi clans, order and cleanliness were to be expected. This was not always the case, but it was strikingly illustrated in two of the villages referred to in this chapter—Endindeni in the northern and Mangozo in the central kingdom.

[476] In day-to-day village affairs much mutual help was given by members of Ngoni families to each other, especially by the men to widowed mothers and sisters, and by the husband's brothers to wives whose husbands were away at work. The dislocation caused to the village economy by the emigration of males called for considerable organization on the part of those who were left. Ngoni male leaders of families and heads of a *banja*, and the women heads of the houses, all had to include the needs of these 'deserted' women in their own planning. In the northern kingdom, in spite of its relative poverty, better care was taken of wives whose husbands were away because the strong virilocal tradition emphasized this type of help.

867 In rearing and training children the Ngoni family structure and relationships provided direction and responsibility. We shall discuss in the next chapter on age sets the significance of birth and puberty ceremonies in Ngoni life. More significant, however, than any ceremony was the continuous provision for the training of children, adolescents and young adults in correct behaviour. This duty fell on the women as far as young children and girls were concerned, and on the men for the

121 in 1938.[1] The sociological and ritual significance of these factors will be
233 the chief emphasis here, with reference to earlier chapters in this book
on Ngoni culture and on the structure of Ngoni society.

In the sociological significance of cattle-ownership there are certain
233 outstanding points to be emphasized, which will be indicated here and
554 developed further in the analysis which follows. One is the connexion
565 between cattle-ownership and status, illustrated by the dominance of the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans in village life, since their possession of cattle was related to the kraal and to the siting of huts and to their house organization. The cattle horns on the roof of the *indlunkulu* were no trivial ornament. They were a proud assertion of cattle-ownership attached to the residences of the leading women, with all the implications of 'house herds' of cattle and of *lobola* given and received. Closely related to cattle-ownership and status was the power conferred by the possession of herds. The status of leading families was enhanced by the ability to give feasts, to give *lobola* for their sons' wives, to make sacrifices to the ancestors and, as we saw at the end of the last chapter, to realize cash by the sale of beasts belonging to the herd. Cattle-owners did at times have to decide whether to maintain and augment their herds and thereby be known as wealthy cattle-owning families; or to sell cattle in order to command labour to build a modern brick house, or to buy fine clothes for their wives and display their wealth in another form.

182 In the organization of Ngoni society, cattle were an important factor
in uniting groups of persons. We have seen how the house, as a group
233 of men and women, and its variant, the central Ngoni form of *banja*,
621 had common possession of a herd of cattle which formed a source of wealth for all members of the house. Within the house the senior men were bound together by the responsibilities attached to the ownership and care of a herd. Within the village the senior men of a house or *banja* united in the upkeep of the kraal, the supervision of the herd-boys, the tending of sick cattle, and in meeting or resisting the Government's demands for culling or dipping stock. Where cattle were boarded out in another village, ties of association in the care of the beasts and in accountability for them bound together the cattle-owners or cattle-keepers of more than one village. A stage in the adjustment of a young wife to a strange village was reached when she added to the herd of the house she had married into the gift cattle given her by her father and so partly compensated for those which had been given to him by her husband's family. A new wife's standing in a village was thus advanced through any cattle which flowed in the opposite direction from those of the *lobola* cattle. Finally, and this is the main theme of this chapter, cattle were an essential link between the living and the dead.

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[1] Read, M. *Native Standards of Living and African Culture Change*. Memorandum XVI of International African Institute, 1938.

768 which it belonged, was always given to a woman whose good character
was vouched for.[1] The man who inherited the *gogo* village with its par-
769 ticular charge to look after the spirits of the dead, as well as the welfare
of the living, also had to be someone of good repute. The responsibility
621 for maintaining social cohesion in a village and among the members of
a house with which the cattle, and therefore the spirits, were closely
bound up, was one which the senior male members of that house
regarded as a solemn duty. If people did not behave well the cattle
would not flourish and multiply, and that would upset the spirits and
be a sign of their disapproval.

Cibambo wrote the following account of the ancestor cult as a part
769 of the presentation of Ngoni customs to his own people. As a Christian
776 minister he was concerned with making a case to his own people for
putting the Ngoni ancestor cult higher in the religious scale than the
cults which used images in their worship. He was using his Christian
beliefs to rationalize the ancestor cult, particularly in relating it to the
concept of a High God. The Ngoni undoubtedly had the idea of a
creator, remote and unapproachable by man, as his title implied, but
nevertheless referred to as the sender of rain, sickness and other benefits
and disasters for the country as a whole. Prayers and sermons by Ngoni
ministers in Ngoniland used many of the old Ngoni terms for the
creator to express their Christian concept of God.

¶ We think that the worship of the Ngoni was better than the worship of other tribes who were near them, for in their worship there were no images made of wood or stones or other things, but they worshipped spirits who were unseen. Nearly all Central African tribes believe that there is a God who created heaven and earth, and who is unseen by eyes. In worship they could not reach him himself with the things of their hearts, so they did not worship him himself. They followed the custom well known among the black people when they wished to talk to their chiefs or their fathers when there was something of importance. A black man thinks it is a great impertinence and dishonour to speak for himself in front of his chief or his father, so he sends someone of standing as his messenger who carries his words and returns with a reply. This custom took effect also in the worshipping of black peoples. In worshipping the creator they made use of a go-between, who stood between God and men. He knew how to speak for them and pray for them before God. They thought that certain created things ought to accomplish this work.

The Ngoni believed that there was God who was chief of all created things and the source of all. Some of the names they gave him were:

UMkulumqango	The Great Deviser
Uluhlanga	The Original Source
UMkulu Kakulu	The Greatest of All
UMnikazi we Zinto Zonke	The Owner of All Things.

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[1] On other grounds, such as kinship, such guardianship might have gone to a woman who was not acceptable on moral grounds and was therefore passed over.

132 rocky outcrops. In September, several weeks before the
rains begin, the trees burst out into red foliage, making
137 scarlet rings and patches around the mountains and along
the valleys, while through the hard-baked earth spring
gladioli and orchids. This is the time of the bush fires when
[221] grass is burned and men and boys go hunting. The first rain
storms bring a transformation. Fresh green grass covers the
land, and scarlet leaves turn bright green on bushes and
trees, and later marigolds turn the hillsides golden and
yellow arums and red-hot pokers appear along the roadsides.

In making this high plateau their home, the Ngoni chose
311 it primarily for the pasture lands for their cattle. They sited
361 their villages on the ridges or the slopes of the hills, where
they had a commanding position, with access to water,
good land for cultivation in the shallow dips and river
valleys, and woodlands where they could cut poles for their
houses and cattle kraals.

The traditional Ngoni village was built in a horse shoe
361 formation round a circular cattle kraal. Larger villages had
351 a central kraal with huts round it, and several other kraals
each with its horseshoe grouping of huts. A large village, and
there were many of over a hundred huts, seemed at first
sight to be a sprawling collection of huts and kraals, with a
few tall trees about and several red ant-hills. A pattern of
hut sites became apparent, however, once the family and kinship grouping was known. Behind each hut was one or more
[343] circular grain stores built on platforms, large ones for maize
and smaller ones for millet or ground-nuts. In the Central
[184] Ngoni kingdom, and sometimes in the Northern kingdom,
[351] there were tall reed fences round the huts of leading families,
enclosing an o[illegible]pace where household work went on, and
wood and grass were stored.

There were two focal points in each village, reproduced
● 621 on a minor scale in the hamlets round each kraal. One was
[554] the 'big house'[1] at the head of the kraal, where the leading
woman had her home.

woman had her home. The other was the 'gate'[2] of the kraal 621
at the opposite end of the enclosure to the 'big house'. The
name by which this 'gate' was known applied also to the [417]
space on each side of the gap in the kraal fence through
which the cattle went out and came in—a gap which was
closed at night with heavy poles. Here at the gate the men [512]
of the village sat by day, ate their meals brought to them by
children from their wives' huts, talked, received strangers,
pursued their crafts, and supervised the return of the cattle
in the evenings.

In and around the main huts within the tall reed fences, 342
the life of a Ngoni household went on. Some of the huts
were rectangular, others round. All had a veranda built up
above the ground-level and shaded by the house roof. The
back parts of the veranda were often enclosed with mats to
make additional storage space. In old Ngoni households the 351
open space around the hut was kept swept and mudded and
polished like a floor, so that people could sit there in comfort
and cleanliness as well as on the veranda. Near the house 417
was one or more little reed platforms about five feet above
the ground, where kitchen utensils, gourds and vegetables
were laid to dry, and which were used to sit under as shelter
from the sun in the hot months. Large and small wooden 415
pounding mortars and poles, clay pots of every size and 352
shape, mats for sleeping and for drying grain, baskets for
many purposes, wooden food trays and spoons, gourds of
several shapes, formed the traditional household equipment
always to be seen outside and around the hut, as well as
inside.

In each household, within the main hut, there were two 353
places of particular significance. One was by the two main 592
door-posts at the entrance. These posts with the hollow for [354]
the fireplace in the centre of the floor divided the hut into
a right-hand and left-hand side—the men's side and the

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[1] and [2] A short list of the vernacular terms for some these common Ngoni place-names is given at end of the book.

Military Service, obedience to the law,
recognition of the Paramount's supremacy were therefore 182
the main traditional forces uniting the mixed populations in the kingdoms.

Ngoni society

Although all people living in the Ngoni kingdoms were 641
subjects of the Paramount, only those who could trace their descent from families who crossed the Zambezi River were recognized as 'true Ngoni'. Four main characteristics marked off this true Ngoni group from the rest. The first was their [614]
clan name, giving them an authentic origin south of the Zambezi. The second was a marriage contract sealed by [589]
handing over cattle, which established the offspring as 'children of their fathers', for, as they said, 'where the children are, the cattle are not'. The third was patrilin[illegible] [411]
descent and inheritance through the male line, and patri[illegible] [428]
local residence at marriage, so that the wife came as a [591]
'stranger' to her husband's people and village. The fourth was membership of a 'house', the social group of male [592]
members of Ngoni families with their wives and children round a leading woman. Everyone was born into a 'house' and the men remained in it for life, the women until their marriage. For special reasons children could be adopted [597]
into another house than the one into which they were born.

In a few of the smaller villages of North Nyasaland, con- 621 ●
sisting of ten to fifteen huts, all the men were true Ngoni, 184
descendants of one or more former warriors in the same regiment, who had chosen to set up their own villages after [701]
the British had taken over the country. In such villages the cultural pattern of Ngoni life could be seen clearly, but they were not typical of the Ngoni kingdoms. There was always a mixture of peoples in the larger villages, dominated by a [563]
group of true Ngoni families.

This group of true Ngoni families were the social and 186
cultural aristocracy of these villages. They considered them- 563
selves superior to and distinct from the other ethnic elements 621

186 in the village, whom they regarded as inferior not only be-
563 cause they had been conquered, but because they disliked
621 and despised their way of living. This sense of separateness
from and of superiority to the non-Ngoni elements in the
villages had its counterpart in the close ties which existed
with Ngoni families in other villages. These ties were rein-
[582] forced socially by 'dynastic' or inter-clan marriages, and
[631] politically through the hierarchy of courts and officials
leading up to the Paramount's court and entourage.

565 The Ngoni aristocracy endeavoured to maintain their
621 traditional ways of living and of bringing up their children
[183] in the face of changes creeping in from the non-Ngoni
[177] elements in the village, as well as from external European
influences. The maintenance of Ngoni ways of living and
cultural patterns of behaviour depended on three main elements in village society. One was the degree of integration
between the Ngoni men in their house groups and in village
society as a whole. This was most evident in chiefs' villages,
and in the villages belonging to the heads of clans. The
second element was the number of wives of true Ngoni
families who had married into the village, thus combining
the influence of husband and wife, or rather of father and
mother, in bringing up children on the Ngoni pattern. The
third element was the number and influence of senior women
[562] of Ngoni families, either wives of older men in the village,
[593] or widows of former leaders. This senior women's group,
[606] many of whom were addressed as 'mother' by the Ngoni
fathers of young families, were a formidable force in maintaining tradition, by advising their sons, coercing their
daughters-in-law, and holding on to their authority at every
stage of the children's development.

Life in two Ngoni villages

121 I am going briefly to sketch in, as a general background
for the following chapters, the main features of two villages,
[114] in one of which I lived for several months, in the other for
a few weeks.

a few weeks. They were both dominated by important 121
Ngoni families, and both the headquarters of subordinate chiefs. They both represented that blend of old and new in Ngoni life which was continually keeping the anthropologist on her toes.

Enkodlweni was far from main roads and centres of 105
modern life. When I first went there my lorry cut a swathe 621
of grass knee-high on the so-called road to the village, and the radiator, choked with grass seed, boiled all the time. I lived in the mud-and-wattle hut maintained by the chief [342]
for visiting teachers and missionaries opposite the school, a four-standard school under an able young headmaster, well [872]
educated and well trained. He and his schoolboys, the resident evangelist and the court clerk represented the new elements in village life. Yet they were not cut off from the Ngoni way of life—on the contrary they were very much part of it and very proud of being Ngoni. The school had been taught in the Ngoni language, akin to old Zulu, until a few years before my visit, and the children were still given Ngoni proverbs to write in their copy-books. Several of the older people had books in their huts written in Zulu as well as in English, and Ngoni was still spoken as the home language in many of the households. The older women knew the traditional special vocabulary used by women only, and dressed their hair in the high chignon style. Proverbs were quoted often in the court and in church; stories of war against the Bemba people in Northern Rhodesia forty years ago were told by the kraal gate as if they happened last year. Several leading Ngoni clans were represented in the village, and each had their own praise songs and forms of addressing their ancestors.

The old evangelist, himself a member of a famous clan, had been threatened, thirty years before, with death by the former chief if he continued to teach and preach. He stayed, notwithstanding, and had become one of the trusted counsellors of the present chief. During the day he joined the

105 senior men who related to me historial events, family genea-
621 logies, war-songs and other Ngoni traditional knowledge, including the ideas and methods of bringing up Ngoni children. In the evenings the schoolboys gathered by my hut to
[124] practise their English, to discuss their school work and their
[191] plans for the future. The tsetse menace had for some time been threatening the cattle and losses were considerable. The boys wanted above all to emigrate and find work so that they could earn money to send home to their fathers to buy more cattle, pay taxes, buy clothes, guns and ammunition, for it was lion country.

Out of the thirty-one households in the village, twenty-
[162] five belonged to the men of Ngoni clans. There were nine elderly widows of Ngoni leading families, and of the younger
[592] women eighteen were true Ngoni. There was therefore both among the men and the women, and in the senior and younger age-groups, a high proportion of those who were true Ngoni and who practised the Ngoni way of living. It was a village where Ngoni cultural patterns were very much in evidence, and where the school and the church, representing modern developments, were closely integrated with village life.

Emcakateni was just off a main road and as easily acces-
[341] sible as Nkodlweni was remote. It was perched on a hill-top in a commanding position, and was much larger, with a hundred and twenty-two households compared with thirty-one. There were several kraals and many cattle, no tsetse menace, but lions in the neighbourhood which more than once attacked the kraal at night. Outsiders, that is of non-Ngoni clans, who had money, had married into the chief's and other leading families, and these households possessed well-built brick houses. I lived in a grass-and-pole hut in-
[342] side a fence, near the compound of the big house. There was
[871] no school in the village, and the nearest one was run by a
[797] mission disliked by the leading Ngoni. The boys spent all their time with the cattle, or hunting or practising crafts.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

There were musicians and craftsmen there, as at Enkodlweni. All the senior Ngoni men knew Ngoni history, used proverbs in the courts and in conversation, and two or three senior men knew and carried out the ritual of the ancestor cult. The new element in this village was due to economic influences rather than missionary and educational. Most of the men had learned to read and write Nyanja while away at work, but no one knew more than a few words of English, and only one or two of the leading men, and no women, spoke Ngoni. 105 621 [212] [191]

The men of the leading Ngoni families formed a closely knit group for purposes of village affairs, social life and ritual performances. There was a group of senior Ngoni women who exerted a powerful influence in all matters concerned with household life and the bringing up of children. But out of a total of one hundred and twenty-one households, only thirty-seven belonged to men of Ngoni clans, and there were only thirty-two women of Ngoni clans including both the older and the younger groups of women. The aristocratic group here was small in comparison with Enkodlweni, but the influence of their ways of living was proportionately much stronger. The Ngoni men and women of leading families were very conscious of their cultural distinction and also of their relatively small numbers, and many were the complaints about 'those other people who are spoiling our land'. [162] [592] [186]

Political and social changes

When the British took over the administration of Nyasaland between 1891 and 1901, the Ngoni kingdoms received no special recognition. Their chiefs, called by the administration principal village headmen, and their heads of clans called village headmen, were relegated to the same position *vis-à-vis* the administration as the local peoples. Part of the Central Ngoni kingdom was cut off from the rest by the treaty demarcating the Nyasaland boundary from Portuguese East Africa. 648 177 [622] [131]

575 the qualities required in self-defence and in mutual aid which
182 he would need when, at the age of eighteen or so, he was
called up into the new regiment formed by the Paramount.
342 Dormitory life was therefore rooted in the Ngoni past and
though its original purpose and outcome had disappeared
with the suppression of tribal wars, it was still part of the
organization for herding cattle and was regarded as a necessary
575 training ground for young manhood. In very large villages
[342] there was more than one dormitory, each placed in a
● [621] section of the village surrounding a cattle kraal. Boys belonged
to the dormitory of that section where their parents'
household was situated. There were occasional attempts
sponsored by certain missions to set up a separate dormitory
[797] for boys who were baptized Christians or in an inquirers'
class. This kind of separation was greatly disliked by the
Ngoni on the grounds that they did not want anything to
divide their people. They regarded dormitory life as an
important co-ordinating factor in their young peoples' development,
and they did not want the tradition to be spoiled.
They therefore opposed any sectionalizing of the dormitory
system except on the geographical lines already mentioned,
which allowed for the full operation of the two remaining
purposes of the dormitory in Ngoni culture.

575 The first of these purposes was to remove boys, once they
562 had their second teeth, from the influence of the women.
861 Ngoni men were outspoken in condemning the effects of all
women's influence on boys. They made a slight exception in
favour of the mothers and grandmothers of high-ranking
Ngoni clans. Non-Ngoni women they always suspected, and
[177] often rightly, of introducing youths and girls to ideas and
practices which were contrary to Ngoni custom, particularly
in connexion with sex and magic. It was partly a belief that
[186] dormitory life would 'Ngoni-ize' the boys and counteract
non-Ngoni influences from whatever source that made them
so unyielding about boys leaving the women's supervision
at what they considered a crucial stage.

829 individuals upon the cohesion of that society through their behaviour and actions. This was illustrated in the phrase so constantly used by them, and referred to already several times: 'He is spoiling the land,' or the converse, quoted in Chapter I: 'Young people were well taught that this behaviour was right for the upbuilding of the land.'

Among these so-called group values the first of all, and pre-
181 eminent above all, was the value of keeping together. Taught
829 by bitter experience that personal quarrels could lead to political secessions and to the diminution of the power and influence of the Ngoni kingdoms, the focus of much of their thinking was on maintaining cohesion whether in small units or in large. I think the Ngoni were the only people in Nyasa-
[641] land where individuals and families were not allowed to
[166] leave the villages to live elsewhere without permission of the
● [621] chief or headman. In the local courts there were frequent cases in which the accused had been guilty of leaving with-
[687] out permission. This illustration could be used also to indicate the second of the group values. I have called it dominance for want of a better term. It involves the exercise of authority, political and legal, over their own and subject peoples, the determination to exact obedience, influenced by a feeling of paternal responsibility for all over whom authority was claimed. This was an ambivalent sentiment affecting the attitude of the ruler and his relations with the ruled, and was the basis of the court case quoted in Chapter VI, when a chief made a judgement against his own son for adultery with a poor man's wife. The third group value was that of mutual aid and trust within the in-group, in order to secure its cohesion. This was the integrating principle of the 'house' system, described briefly in Chapter I and mentioned in many other contexts. Mutual trust and aid had been in the past the main element in the behaviour of men in their own regiments, in the mutual relation of warrior with warrior, both when on
181 campaigns and when living together in the villages.

577 The four personal values were inherent in the acceptance

[P.1]

CHAPTER I

MARRIAGE IN THE TIME OF PEACE

1. *The old social structure*

IN THE DAYS before the European conquest, the Ngoni people lived 361
in large villages each containing hundreds of huts built round a
central cattle byre. Each married woman had her own hut [585]
and there were separate dormitories for boys and for girls. The huts
were grouped into small clusters, each containing the dwellings of a [592]
few close agnates with their wives and children under the leadership
of the senior male agnate. If the leader of the cluster was an [554]
important person, captives taken in war were allocated to him and
their huts were included in his own cluster. Clusters were grouped [727]
into divisions, each usually under the control of a village lieutenant. 621
Within the same division the heads of clusters were either agnates
of the lieutenant or were people who had been captured by him or [624]
his father or who had been allocated to him by the chief and who
were therefore bound to him as quasi-kinsmen. Several divisions [602]
made up a village under a headman or a regional governor. The
village lieutenants were dependents or former captives of the headman
or his ancestors, and were allocated to their divisions by him.
Some divisions were under the control of junior kinsmen of the
headman. Each village was attached to a royal headquarters where 631
there was a senior queen. This arrangement of clusters, divisions,
villages, and royal headquarters, which I refer to as the residential [728]
system, seems to have been similar to that found to-day among the [171]
Swazi.[1]

The system was a growing one. Brothers brought up in the same 631
cluster gradually achieved their independence and split off to
establish clusters of their own. The heads of clusters grew in 571
importance and were promoted to village lieutenants so that their
clusters became divisions, while divisions grew too large to be
contained within the villages and moved off to establish themselves
as separate villages. This process of expansion did not in itself
affect the formal hierarchy of authority. The lieutenant who
established his own village as a distinct spatial entity still remained
a lieutenant of his lord, and deferred to him in matters of importance.
The same word[2] was used to refer to a division of a royal headquarters,
a division of a village, and a cluster within a division. The relationships of superordination and subordination between persons remained
the same despite changes in spatial separation.

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[1] Cf. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p. 66.

[2] *Cigaŵa*, pl. *vigaŵa*, from *ku-gaŵa*, to divide.

segment of the residential system was recognized and institution- 581
alised. Furthermore, it is in line with this thesis that, in arranging 602
the marriage of recent captives, no great attention was paid to the 554
establishment of farflung affinal links. Frequently a man and a
woman who had been allocated to the same captor, and whom they
both addressed as 'father', married one another on his instructions.
Payments made in these marriages were small or non-existent.
Recent captives were too low in the hierarchical structure to be
concerned about reinforcing their position by horizontal ties. Their
ambitions were directed to securing promotion by becoming
lieutenants of their captors.

5. Autonomy of marriage

The pattern of segmentation of the residential system was 621 ●
continually changing. In part this was due to proliferation 581
downwards, that is, by the process of increasing segmentation 591
between brothers and between fathers' sons. In addition to this
process political promotion and death in war altered the relative
position of the segments associated with particular people. Marriage
itself was a social process which, in so far as the relationship between
man and wife was concerned, did not react directly on the residential [611]
system. This system was based on patrilineal descent and patrilocal [591]
residence and the movements of women, except at the level of the
queens, were from one point of view irrelevant to the system. It
was the grouping of children round their mother, in contrast to
their father's children by other wives, which related the marriages
of one generation to the patterns of segmentation of the next. A
woman with no children in her house, whether her status was high [554]
or low, was structurally irrelevant to the residential system.

Marriage was also largely independent of the central government.
Warfare, not domesticity, was the right and proper occupation of [721]
young men, and the age at which men married for the first time was
probably about thirty. Informants all stressed that in the old days 582
first marriage took place at later ages for both men and women
than it does now. Wiese implies that girls were married any time [114]
after puberty;[illegible] *but my informants stated that girls did not usually*
marry until they were aged about twenty to twenty-five. Men
and women were organised into parallel age-sets, usually referred to [567]
as regiments, and corresponding regiments used to dance and frolic
together. Sometimes a man took a wife from the regiment corres-
ponding to his own, but there does not seem to have been any positive
obligation to do so. Particular regiments were not prevented from
marrying, as among the Zulu, and all the tales of the Paramount [643]
Chief intervening in the affairs of warriors are phrased in terms of
the chief instructing a laggard to find himself a wife when all his
age mates had already married. The chief did however interfere

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[illegible] Wiese, op. cit. 'Expedição . . .', p. 473, and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 191.

CHAPTER II

PROCESSES OF CHANGE

White conquest

THE SOCIAL system which we have so far described flourished in 648
an environment in which the Ngoni people were separated
from other tribes by a no-man's-land. Ngoni raiding parties [724]
rossed this tract and returned with captives, food and some cattle.
he only other contacts with the outside world were with Arab
lave-traders and their agents who exchanged slaves and ivory [439]
or cloth and guns, and with a few white and half-caste traders
nd explorers. In 1898 the Ngoni army was defeated by a force 648
nder British leadership and many villages were burnt down. Very
any of the cattle were looted and the people dispersed. A White 177
ownship was built in the middle of the Ngoni kingdom, the warriors
ere disarmed, and an administrative system was established
nvolving both Whites and Ngoni. Missionaries arrived, schools [797]
ere opened, labour recruiters and later tobacco planters began their
ctivities.

We are not concerned here with the total effect of this sequence [121]
f events but only with the results it has had on marriage. We
an distinguish a number of fields in which processes initially external
o the indigenous society began to impinge on it and to become [178]
art of it. The establishment of White control brought to an end
he Ngoni wars. The building up of the Cewa chieftainships
ontiguous to Ngoni country affected the whole scheme of values held
y Ngoni people at the same time as those values were being altered
y the intrusion of White technology, political offices, legal concepts,
nd religions. The physical dispersion of the people in the face of
he British troops was followed by a greater dispersion of men, and
ater of women and children as well, over the mining centres of
Southern Rhodesia and the Copperbelt. 178

The large villages which formed the core of the residential system [361]
were burnt, and their inhabitants never all came together again.
At first people lived in small settlements of three or four grass shacks
built in the hills or in the bush. Gradually the people gathered
together in distinct villages, but their population was different in
structure from that of the former villages. The groupings of people
which stayed together after 1898 represented the smallest fragments [621]
of the residential system, and these small fragments collected together
into larger associations which were related to, but by no means
coincident with, the larger segments of the old system. Some [591]
segments left the area and rejoined the tribes from whence they

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni
Maravi FR4

N
178 came. Others followed maternal links or were attracted to the
591 district messengers, the newly-created political agents of the White
N Administration. About 1912 the Administration adopted a policy
of decreasing the number of distinct villages and effected amalga-
[648] mations between villages which had nothing at all in common
except spatial proximity. Later still, from about 1920 onwards,
N new immigrants began to enter the area from the surrounding Cewa
[167] tribe in the face of alienation of land to Whites.

N These villages became the basic local administrative units. Men
178 were identified in terms of their tribe, their chief, and their village.
To this extent the new village inherited the political functions of
621 the old. But men, instead of being fixed in their allegiance, moved
641 from village to village seeking good land for their gardens and freedom
from quarrels. The proliferation of villages was to some extent
controlled by the Administration, so that if a man quarrelled with
his elder brother he could no longer easily set up a village of his own.
Instead he sought refuge with his maternal or affinal kin, registered
himself in their village, and became for some purposes at least
subordinate to the headman of that village. A man's political
position was determined by where he had decided to live, whereas
N under the old system he had had to live where he belonged politically.
The whole nature of affinal and maternal ties shifted so that in some
[602] instances they became more important than the ties of paternal
kinship.

N 2. *Rival tribes*

648 The values of Ngoni life were in the old days held in conscious
opposition to those of the tribes with whom they fought. All
177 the later captives came from matrilineal uxorilocal tribes, who made
only token transfers at marriage, and who married at an earlier age
than did the military Ngoni. They did not take so severe a view of
adultery, and for girls copulation at puberty was obligatory. Captives
who had been brought up in this tradition were in the old days
forcibly required to adopt the Ngoni way of life, and indeed it seems
likely that to some extent they did so willingly as part of the process
N by which they transferred themselves in allegiance from one group
to the other. After 1898 the central government of the Ngoni lost
[182] much of its power and it was no longer able to enforce conformity to
Ngoni standards. Ngoni marriage payments had been made in
N cattle, and the looting of cattle made it more difficult to maintain
M these payments. The example provided by the adjacent Cewa
167 chiefdoms reinforced the tendency to depart from the modes of
behaviour of the past. Furthermore, groups of Cewa entered Ngoni
177 country after 1898, as we have already noted, and these people had
N never been indoctrinated with Ngoni beliefs and values. In addition,
M many individuals followed their captured relatives and joined them
[621] where they were living in Ngoni country. To-day some villages,
although under Ngoni chiefs, have matrilineal succession, dance

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5 ●
Mpezeni
Maravi FR4

N
M

Cewa dances, speak Cewa, and are to a lesser extent internally 167
organized on Cewa lines. They do not form a distinct class of 177
village in Ngoni country, and are inextricably bound by ties of 621
kinship with their neighbours. But there are fewer traces of the N
former pre-1898 system of organization in such villages than in those M
which have a remembered history linking them with the glorious [184]
past.[1]

3. Christianity

N

At the same time as Ngoni values were being undermined from 648
within by the Cewa, they were attacked from without by the Whites. 797
The first missionaries to settle in the area arrived in 1899, although
there had been some earlier contact. They attempted to convert 581
Ngoni to Christianity, and therefore to monogamy and pre-marital chastity. In chastity the missionaries were allied with the Ngoni against the Cewa; in monogamy the missions fought against Ngoni allied to Cewa. New rituals were introduced and a new hierarchy developed, composed of priests, evangelists and deacons. However, in this region, unlike much of the rest of Africa, the impact of Christianity has not produced a distinctive legal status of persons married by Christian rite. The Administration's earliest piece of marriage legislation was the *North-Eastern Rhodesia Marriage Regulations*, 1903.[2] There was specific provision for monogamous marriages between Africans, with penalties for bigamy and detailed rules for the division of property left by Africans married under these regulations and dying intestate. Few, if any, marriages involving Africans were made in this form, for it seems that the missions did not license themselves under the Regulations and their ceremonies therefore did not have legal significance to the Administration. These elaborate provisions were repealed by the *Northern Rhodesia Marriage Proclamation*, 1918.[3] Since then the only form of marriage performed within Northern Rhodesia between Africans that has legal significance in the eyes of the Administration is marriage 'in accordance with native law and custom'. What
constitutes such a marriage has never been rigidly defined. N

The missions themselves have differed in their attitude towards 797
indigenous marriage. One mission insists that all 'customary 581
obligations' must be fulfilled in addition to Christian rites, another holds that it is wrong to transfer wealth from one side to another in marriage, while a third holds that the fulfilment or not of any customary obligations is not the concern of the church. The Native

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[1] Cf. Read, 'Tradition and prestige' and 'Moral code' for an account of some of these changes in structure and values, based on observations of three Ngoni kingdoms.

[2] Government Notice No. 2 of 1903, *British Central Africa Gazette*, 148, x, 1, 31 January 1903.

[3] N.R. No. 18 of 1918, *Northern Rhodesia Government Gazette*, viii, 11, 7 September 1918.

[P.22]

CHAPTER III

HUSBANDS AND WIVES

1. The field of modern marriage

581 MARRIAGE nowadays among the Ngoni still regulates the sexual
activities of man and wife and determines the responsibility
for the care of their young children, the inheritance of their
property, and succession to office. To a lesser extent it still
determines residence and establishes relationships between a partner
to the marriage and his or her affines. It is an institution which
involves sooner or later almost every Ngoni man or woman who
survives into adulthood. The number of people who die adult and
[826] unmarried is very small. Even albinos, who are regarded generally
with disgust, usually succeed in marrying. The only people who
589 fail to marry at all are: seriously crippled people who are regarded
as not strong enough to look after themselves; a few prostitutes who
[548] acquire a reputation for wantonness before they have managed to
find a husband and who live in a succession of temporary alliances
with men in and around the township of Fort Jameson; and a
category of persons known as 'quite useless people',[1] that is, people
[828] who are mad or in some way deranged so that they are unable to
settle down in any place and are always wandering about from village
to village, begging shelter, beer and food.

A man who does not marry, or who remains divorced or widowed
for many years, is regarded as unusual, and others say of him that
he must smell like a he-goat so that no woman will have him. A
man in his twenties without a wife is laughed at by the married
women, who despise him as impotent. Very few men in fact stay
long without a wife, and of people whose personalities are regarded
as normal it is only a few old widowers who do not have a wife to
cook for them and sleep with them. Some women stay for longer
without a husband, partly because of the numerical preponderance
[162] of women over men caused by labour migration.

Some idea of the extent to which marriage affects everyone sooner
128 or later is given by Tables III and IV. These tables, like all the
others in this paper, are based on information collected systematically
121 from six Ngoni villages. Two of these villages, containing 257 and
142 residents, situated twenty-five miles apart and in different
counties, were selected for me to live in by the county chiefs con-
cerned. The remaining four villages containing 143, 104, 55 and 45
[621] residents, were close together but in a third county and twenty miles
away from the other two.

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[1] *Cisilu*, pl. *visilu*, or else *ŵuntu ŵatyalatyala*. Cf. Nsenga *silu*, pl. *masilu*, idiot.

lives for some years with a European may leave him and enter into a 595
proper marriage. The favourite wife of a chief who died a few years 648
ago had earlier been the mistress of a European. 582

Christians must abide by the rules of their church or risk ecclesiastical
censure. A baptized Catholic man may marry only a Catholic
girl or he will be suspended from receiving the sacraments. A 799
Catholic woman must either marry a baptized Catholic or obtain 582
dispensation to marry a catechumen. A catechumen of either sex
can marry another catechumen or a pagan. In addition Catholics
cannot marry if the marriage would infringe canon law. Catholic
cross-cousins, therefore, can marry only by concealing their relationship
from the priest. In the Dutch Reformed Church a baptized
person, or a member of a class of instruction, cannot marry a pagan
or a Catholic without being suspended. Other missions have similar
rules.

Locality is of some importance in influencing a man's choice. The 621
bigger the village he lives in the more likely he is to take a wife from 582
within it, but the belief still persists that it is better to find a wife
from outside one's own village if possible. In a polygynous household
a wife married from her husband's own village still does not rank
as high as one who has been brought in from outside, of whom it is [554]
said 'her husband had to walk to get her'. The mechanisms by
which people living in different villages are brought into contact 628
are numerous,[4] but for finding a spouse the two most important are 584
inter-village dance contests and visits to relatives. Teams of young 535
people, usually all girls and young women, go from their own village
to others in the vicinity to dance against the home teams. Young
men stand around watching them and discuss among themselves the
erotic possibilities of individual dancers. As darkness falls the
dancers start back home, escorted by the young men who flirt with
them on the way. At the weekends there are many young men back
in the villages from their employment on the farms or in Fort
Jameson and they sometimes gather into gangs of half-a-dozen or so,
wandering from village to village in their best clothes, with dark
glasses and walking sticks, looking at the girls' dances and trying to
make assignations. This sort of flirtation is confined to the young
and irresponsible, and it would be regarded as unseemly for a
middle-aged man to pay much attention to the dances of young girls.

More respectable contacts are made by young people who go off 628
to stay with their relatives in distant villages. Everyone has 589
kinsmen and affines in many different villages, and it is the custom 574
to visit back and forth for weeks at a time. A young man may go on
several days journey to visit his relatives among the Cewa and
Nsenga tribes, or to live for a while with a relative working on a
distant farm. While he is away, he may meet a girl whom he likes,
and arrange to marry her. The dance situation does not provide

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[4] Cf. Barnes, op. cit. pp. 214 ff

11. Headmen

The kin of the couple are not the only people in the village who are 622
concerned in their marriage. In any matter of importance taking 624
place in the village, attracting many onlookers and participants,
there should always be someone to represent the 'owner' of the village, 585
as the headman is also called. This is as true of marriage as of
anything else. The intervention of the headman is clearly seen in
such situations as the gall bladder ceremony and the entry into the
wife's mother's hut. At these public affairs a lieutenant may be
acting as master of ceremonies, even though he is not directly related
to the couple. In most villages everyone is related in some way or
other to everyone else in the village, but unless the marriage involves
one of the close kin of the headman or his lieutenant, it is clear from
the role he plays that he is present not because of his kinship to the
couple but because he is a political official in the village. Thus at
a gall bladder ceremony a lieutenant was called in to anoint the bride
although he came from another division of the village. At another,
a village lieutenant instructed the bride with these words: 'I am
the lieutenant of the village. Fear me and I will also fear you.
Work hard for [your father-in-law] Jesse.'

The headman of the village ought to be called to, or at least told 622
about, any meeting to discuss a quarrel, and if the matter is taken 578
to the court, he may be required to explain what steps he took to
settle the quarrel in the village. His opinion on the character of
the married couple is listened to. In the case of Daniel and Deborah,
we have seen that at the first two meetings the headmen of the two
villages were present, and although the headman of Daniel's village
was not very closely related to him (he was Daniel's father's wife's
father's wife's son) he took part in the discussion. At the third
meeting the headman of Deborah's village was not called, but it is
significant that the headman's father's father's brother's son was
called in. The village was in danger of splitting at about that time, [621]
for a variety of reasons, and the headman's classificatory father was
trying to form a separate village.

12. The Court

Beyond the ambit of the village lie the courts and the Adminis- 692
tration. We have seen that it is to the court that married couples 648
go when their troubles are greater than their kinsfolk can deal with.
Beyond the courts there is always the possibility of appeal to the
Administration, and from time to time the Administration intervenes 797
in village affairs on its own initiative. Another external system
impinging on marital affairs is that focussed on the missions. By
contrast, the interests of White planters and urban employers are
concentrated in fields other than marriage, and except in the case of 466
employees of long standing, they do not concern themselves with the
marital affairs of their labourers, save in so far as attention to these
may conflict with a man's attendance at work. In the particular

But we know from other areas 121
that loss of sovereignty itself does not necessarily disrupt the marriage arrangements of common people and we must look elsewhere for an explanation.

2. Movement between villages

The old villages formed part of the residential system, and their 621
structure was maintained by the power of the central chieftainship,
as expressed through the lieutenants of the royal villages, and by the
diffuse sanction of public opinion based on ideas held in common
as to the rights conferred by the payment of bridewealth. Nowadays
the lieutenants of the royal villages have very much less power, and [178]
bridewealth is not often paid. The village is held together by the
various ties of kinship and affinity between its members, and to a
slight extent by the restriction of movement from one village to
another. This control, exercised by the Administration through the [648]
system of registration of adult males, is largely ineffective except
in the Resettlement Areas.[3] Men and women are more or less free to
live wherever they can find relatives, and if they quarrel in one
village they can move to another where they hope life will be more
pleasant. There is no general rule to which appeal can be made
concerning whether a married couple should live uxorilocally or
virilocally. Hence a quarrel between man and wife or between
affinally related people may lead to a split in the village, and the
dissident section may attempt to form a village of its own or attach
itself to another village. It is therefore in the interests of the
headman that quarrels in his village should be settled as rapidly as [622]
possible, and he has therefore an interest in the private lives of his
people even though they may not be his close relatives. His interests
are represented by his lieutenants and are shared by everyone in
the village who wishes his own to be a large prosperous and happy
village. The theme of the good and happy village recurs in many [183]
of the formal situations of Ngoni life and finds expression in much of
local action on a village basis, as for example in the competitive
dances, the division of food at a ceremony and the organization of
the religious sects.

We find therefore that the headman and his lieutenants participate
in the ceremonies of marriage and in marital quarrels. Conversely [622]
the headman is brought into relationship with the married couple by the allocation to him of pots of beer whenever there is a general distribution even though he may not be at the ceremony. Other important men and women similarly participate merely because of their common membership of the village. For example, a hoeing party was led by a middle-aged woman who was described as 'an important person' in the son-in-law's village. She was in fact

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[3] Areas which have been reopened to settlement by Ngoni and other tribes since 1941 with various restrictions on agricultural methods and on population. About ten per cent of Ngoni live in Resettlement Areas.

621 related to him but her participation was explained in terms of her
status as an 'important person' and not in terms of this relationship.

A man can move from his village to his wife's village if he or she
591 has quarrelled with his kinsfolk, and a quarrel with her relatives may
178 cause them to move in the reverse direction. These shifts from one
kind of residence to another occurred in a different context in the
old system. We have seen that there was sometimes a change from
uxorilocal to virilocal residence, for at the beginning of his first
marriage a man might leave his wife living uxorilocally until he had
paid bridewealth. If there was a quarrel between a man and his
wife's kin at this stage, they might try to delay his taking the woman
to his own village, although they could not entirely prevent him
from so doing. Hostility found expression in the desire to keep him
under close surveillance, not in the desire to be rid of him. This old
idea still persists to some extent, as we have seen in the story of
Abner and Esther (p. 79). Esther wanted her husband Abner to
live in her village so that her father could see that he looked after
her well. A man may refuse to allow his daughter to move to her
husband's village until he is satisfied that the young man is a good
husband. This line of action, however, now applies only at the
beginning of a marriage and in families where a man is determined
to maintain his control over his growing children. When there is
a quarrel involving a couple who have been married for a long time,
it is then too late to hope that a man will improve his behaviour
under the eye of his wife's father. If he quarrels with his father-in-law
it is better that he should go and live in his own village.

The significance of the reverse move, from virilocality to uxorilocality,
was different in the old system from what it is in the new.
In the light of what we know of the South-Eastern Bantu and by
reference to the present position among the Ngoni it seems probable
that in the old days it did happen from time to time that a man
sought refuge with his wife's agnates. Yet from the dearth of
instances of this in my genealogical material it would seem that this
cannot have occurred very often. Once a man had established
himself in virilocal residence he usually stayed there. If he quarrelled
with his kinsfolk all he could do was to move off and make his own
segment distinct from those of his brothers; he could not seek
permanent shelter with his wife's kinsfolk. Nowadays he can do so,
and it may be easier for him to change to uxorilocal residence than
621 to try to form his own group. In the old days the transition from
what we now call a cluster to a division or from a division to a village
178 was a gradual one. Spatial separation between minor segments of
the same order was initially a matter of yards and with successive
moves in the tribal migration became a matter of miles. Nowadays
698 there is a definite number of villages recognized by the Administration
and a man who establishes his own residential cluster of huts is, or
361 at least was until very recently, in danger of punishment for not
living in a recognized village. For many years there was an

Administrative ruling that no new village could be started without 648
a minimum of ten taxpayers, and earlier it was the policy of the 361
Administration to decrease the number of independent villages.
These policies have now changed, and throughout the period there
have always been devices for lessening their effect, but it is still true
that sometimes the easiest way for a man to flee from his kinsmen is 591
to build his hut in his wife's village.

Case history 14

Samuel's father was headman of a village. Samuel[36] married in the
village and had four sons by his wife before she died. His second wife
lived with him virilocally and after she had borne two children she committed
adultery with one of Samuel's elder brothers. Samuel divorced her and
married a third wife who died soon after. Samuel accused his brothers of [954]
killing his first and third wives by sorcery. He married a fourth wife and
went to live in her village, taking with him his four sons by his first wife
and the elder child by his second wife. He is still registered at his father's
village and attends there whenever the District Officer tours the area, but
he has little to do with his brothers.

In this way the movements of men and women between villages 591
reflect the struggles between kinsfolk and between affines. Besides
the formation of new villages, which goes on despite obstacles 621
placed in the way, there is a continual reshuffling of the elements
making up the existing villages. Through marriage a man acquires
affines and through them places where he can live if he wants to do
so. This change in the structure of the village is therefore related
to the new role of villages in the administrative scheme, the new [178]
rules for their formation, and the new kinds of movement from one
village to another. By reason of his marriages the number of moves
that a man can make if need be is increased.

3. Polygyny

The other important structural change that has been directly 595
related to external influences is the decreased incidence of polygyny. 178
In the old days a man acquired dependants in two ways, by begetting
them and by capturing them. Wealth consisted of cattle and [556]
dependants, and the well-remembered names of the past are those
of patriarchs with dozens of wives whose offspring now form the
core of many villages. Nowadays the missions oppose polygyny,
wealth can be acquired in other ways than by the marriage of
daughters, and a variety of relatives with different genealogical ties
can be gathered round one as dependants. It is rare to find a man
with as many as five wives. With the decline in polygyny the [954]
system of ranking that was used to organize large compound
households has fallen into decay, and except when the issue has been [592]
complicated by the payment of bridewealth, wives are simply ranked
in chronological order of marriage. With the increased importance

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[36] See genealogy, p. 81.

tion for associating children with one parent rather than the other. 611
There is only the one proud dogma that the Ngoni, unlike their 591
neighbours, are a patrilineal virilocal people. This reflects the 602
actual dominance of the virilocal mode of residence but does not
furnish a rule to which appeal can be made in specific cases. The
only definite unit to which a man can be said to belong is his village, [621]
and such few attempts as are made to enforce rights *in genetricem*
are expressed in terms of residence in villages. In marriages that
are made outside the tribe, rights *in genetricem* become significant, 648
for a child is not likely to wander to and fro between one tribe and 583
another hundreds of miles away in the same way as children change
from one village to another within the kingdom. Here then we find
more attention paid to the payment of bridewealth and to rights
in genetricem and these rights are enforceable through the police
checks on buses and lorries.

If a man is away working his interests are represented by his 593
kinsfolk. They cannot exercise his rights *in uxorem* for him, but if they are violated they can act on his behalf. His permission is necessary, however, before they can proceed to the court, and if they are awarded damages then they are under some sort of obligation to hand over the money to him when he returns. There was no situation comparable to this in the old system, for men did not go away for years at a time, and the violation of rights *in uxorem* was punishable by death.

The position of the man as holder of rights *in uxorem* over his 593
wife is reinforced to some extent by mystical ties believed to connect 581
the couple, and at the same time the man can fortify his rights by the use of medicines to ensure fidelity. During pregnancy, for a short while after childbirth, and during menstruation, the actions of man and wife affect one another automatically, and each is placed in danger of illness by the failure of the other to observe their mutual obligations. To protect his rights *in uxorem* a man may doctor his wife so that possible violators may be deterred by the fear of mystical retribution as well as action in the courts.

7. *Mystical beliefs and marriage stability*

The mystical connexion believed to exist between a man and his 581
wife serves to define their relationship more closely, for this same 600
connexion does not hold between a woman and her husband's kin or between a man and his wife's kin. The adultery of a pregnant woman's brother-in-law, like her husband's adultery, may threaten the peace of her local group of relatives and friends, and may even lead her to change her village or go to the court as a supporter. The important distinction between the adultery of her husband's brother and her husband's adultery is that the former does not automatically endanger her delivery while the latter does. A man confesses his adultery when his own wife gives birth, not when her sister is in labour. This connexion is definite, and is not extended

unity of full-siblings is the result of the established relationship 602
between their mother and father. A man's relationship with his wife may in turn lead to solidarity between their children, but until his wife has stayed with him for many years and borne him live 593
children their own relationship is always uncertain. He must acknowledge that she too has rights, that she must be clothed and respected and must be slept with. He must not abuse her at a beer party or hit her too often, and he must not try to trap her into adultery. When she runs away, he must go after her to apologize.

8. *The support of relatives*

It is the tenuousness of the marriage relationship which necessitates 581
the co-operation of the relatives in the marriage. There are occasions 602
when affines quarrel, as when a young woman is encouraged by her husband's kin to remain in their village to be delivered of her first child and at the same time is under pressure from her own relatives to move back to her own village for the confinement. A man who is anxious to build up his own cluster of huts in a village may attempt to force his sons and daughters to bring their spouses to live near him against the wishes of his children's affines. These struggles, [591]
where they occur, are expressed in terms of residence, for it is common residence that welds kinsfolk together. But in general affines co-operate rather than quarrel. Litigation about marriage payments is rare, and frequently divorces are granted without consideration of the return of marriage payments. During a marriage it is more important that the married couple should be exhorted to adjust themselves to each other and be tolerant of each other's foibles, than that each side should insist on its formal rights. Old people try to prevent marriages they consider unsuitable, but they do not usually try to make difficulties once a marriage has taken place. The successful marriages of a man's children bring him grandchildren to care for and play with, and *children's parents-in-law* who will welcome him and give him food, even if they do not always add to his own cluster of huts.

To some degree people appear to be afraid of the sorcery of an [754]
offended affine, but this is not a well-developed idea, and more frequently people express their reasons for trying to patch up a 581
marriage that is in danger of breaking in terms of the need for everyone to 'live well together', without bringing troubles into the 621 ●
village. The well-being of the village and of the local group of kinsfolk within it has ultimate value for the Ngoni and is an end in [181]
itself. It follows that serious quarrels can only be resolved by means of some new residential alignment, involving moves from one cluster to another, and from one village to another. The village itself does not exist in isolation, and a village thrives because 628
of the ties that link it to other villages in the vicinity. Marriages 604
link villages together, by the bonds of affinity which cut across 581
village boundaries, and by the interaction between groups of affines

Other parts of the Eastern Province resettlement areas are also 'fly' country, but apparently free from sleeping sickness and it is only in the northern zone that intensive measures against tsetse have been carried out so far. The large available land area in Mkushi enabled the relatively small 'fly' areas to be avoided. This was fortunate as sleeping sickness is believed to be endemic in the western 'fly' areas of Mkushi. 166 136 164 744

The resettlement area of Ndola District was believed to contain sparse 'fly' in local pockets. Trials were made by the Agricultural and Veterinary Departments in co-operation by placing herds of cattle throughout the area and grazing them within a definite range about the kraals. Ten herds each of five beasts were used; the animals were numbered and blood slides were taken from each at frequent intervals. As a result of these trials it was found that almost the whole area was free of trypanosomyaisis and suitable for stock raising, and the small areas of 'fly' infestation were defined.

§ 6. *Method of Settlement*

Areas for resettlement were allocated to each tribe and chieftaincy in accordance with the general plan to restore the population-land balance as far as possible. Movement was, in theory at least, entirely voluntary but in many cases a good deal of persuasion was necessary to obtain the necessary number of villages. Most villages naturally preferred that their neighbour should move and that they should take over the vacated land rather than go to the trouble of moving. District Officers and Agricultural Officers held preliminary discussions with the people and the question of the villages to move into the resettlement areas was settled with the co-operation of the Native Authorities. Population counts of these villages were made, usually by District Officers. 166 621● 648

Headmen and other representatives of the villagers who had finally elected to move then toured the area allocated to them and selected sites for the new villages. The headmen and the villagers almost invariably arranged this matter among themselves without any difficulty whatsoever. The selected sites were then marked on the Vegetation-Soil Map. Blocks of land having an estimated carrying capacity approximating to the total villages population, allowing for temporary absentees, were demarcated around the selected sites, using roads, streams, hills and cut or blazed lines as boundaries. Estimates of land carrying capacity were, of course, based on the traditional agriculture of the people concerned. This allocation of land areas for individual villages proved universally popular; the people are jealous of their boundaries and, apparently, willing to maintain them. They have usually built permanent stone beacons, to replace temporary timber structures, where the boundaries are not clearly defined by natural features. [622] [311] [423]

This general method of controlled settlement was not individually applied or always possible. The great escarpment area of the Eastern Province, 166 648

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Stated very briefly, the problem is this: an Ngoni aristocratic minority 121
created an Ngoni 'state' of mixed ethnic units, imposed a national [642]
identity on all who formed part of it, and inspired a real 'national [641]
feeling' among those who were assimilated. In this article I propose
to look at this problem as it exists to-day in the light of white contact,
and more particularly as a prelude to Indirect Rule. My thesis is that N
Ngoni 'national feeling' is based on the traditions of their past—on [186]
the story of their southern origin, their trek from the south, and their
settlement in their present areas. I shall show how the continued N
preservation of their distinctive institutions, together with their strong [178]
historical sense, gave them a dominant position in the country, which
was enforced through their military and political supremacy. This N
supremacy was first challenged and then overthrown by the arrival of [721]
the Europeans and the defeat of the Ngoni military power. The situation [648]
thus created is the key to the Ngoni attitude towards white
contact to-day.

The plan of work which I adopted at the beginning had as its aim
the establishing of certain essential data—namely, to determine the
principles of local or territorial settlement in relation to the political N
organization and the ethnic constitution of the area. This involved 126
making maps of the Paramount Chief's 'country' and of the 'countries' [631]
of his subordinate chiefs, showing the areas over which individuals
exercised authority and their relation to those above and below
them in the political hierarchy. It also involved making a number of
village plans, showing the alignment of houses on the village site,
the names and clans of the inhabitants and their mutual relations in N
terms of kinship groups and village organization.[1] In villages called M
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Ngoni villages, that is, where the 'owner' of the village was of a [621] ●
recognized Ngoni clan and where there was a nucleus of Ngoni clansmen, [614]
the individuals in Ngoni clans numbered from 25–75 per cent.
of the total inhabitants, the average being about 45 per cent. In a N M
number of the villages where no Ngoni clans were represented, the [641]
villagers nevertheless asserted, 'We are Ngoni, because we are the

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[1] This collecting of village plans was viewed with some suspicion at first as a new way of helping the Government to catch tax defaulters. However, when I promised the Paramount Chief that no one in the locality should see the village plans, he sent out word that I was to be given all the information I needed, and no one need fear the consequences. N M 123

political and military organization into an effective group. What
meaning, therefore, can we give to the term 'Ngoni', and how can 121
this group which calls itself Ngoni be analysed into its component 101
parts?

II. WHAT DOES THE TERM 'NGONI' MEAN? The references made 101
hitherto show that the term 'Ngoni' is used in several different connotations.
It is, strictly speaking, an historical linguistic term, and
referred originally to that group of clans described as 'Nguni' because
they spoke a language classified to-day as the Nguni dialects.[1] Some- [197]
where on the march north the Ngoni changed the *u* to an *o*, and
arrived in their present areas saying 'We are Ngoni'. They assert [173]
emphatically that it was on the march they began to say 'We are [829]
Ngoni', and they suggest that it was important to have some general
term to cover individuals from many mixed groups.

The name Ngoni having been assumed on the march north, it 101
obviously at first only covered those clans which were of true southern 619
origin, or as we should say to-day, of Zulu or Swazi stock. This is
the meaning which Ngoni still has when used in its narrow or strict
sense to-day. In collecting the clan names in a village, for example,
the headman says 'Those are Ngoni, those are Makalanga, those are 614
Nsenga', and so on. The true Ngoni clans are those most highly 563
honoured, the real aristocrats, and a little experience teaches the field [114]
worker to recognize their bearing as they walk about among the rest.
In a village containing several clans, the houses of the Ngoni clans [621]
occupy the most honourable places in the middle of the horse-shoe
formation surrounding the cattle kraal. In any meeting at a chief's
village the men and women of Ngoni clans sit nearest to the chief and
drink beer before the rest. This ranking by clans, however, does not
stop at the true Ngoni. They lead the hierarchy, but other clans also
claim precedence in a rough geographical order of the tribes absorbed
from south to north. The true Ngoni illustrate this by saying, 'In
old days the only men who were made *indunas* were those of the Swazi,
Zulu, Suto, and Tonga clans. After we settled here, *indunas* were made
from the Makalanga, Nsenga, and Sukuma clans'. There is therefore

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[1] See *Bantu Studies*, Sept. 1934, for classification of the South African languages. [113]
Also A. T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, for list of Nguni clans.

We have also to recognize that the wider connotation of the word is 101
in constant use to-day, and it will be apparent in the course of this
article that those who like to be thought Ngoni but have no real claim [829]
to the name, find ways in which to identify themselves with the real [565]
Ngoni, and to impress upon outsiders that they share the distinction
of that name.

III. NGONI SOCIETY AS A CULTURAL UNIT. It is evident that the 128
field worker who tries to describe and analyse the society which is
found in the Ngoni areas to-day has some difficulty in establishing
appropriate and correct terms. Here is a society which is a compound 178
of ethnic units, subdivided into clans according to kinship, stratified 829
into ranks, held together by a ruling aristocracy and a strong cen- [105]
tralized political organization. This society differs radically from that of a homogeneous community where the sociological structure has gone through a long process of integration or disintegration, or has remained static over a period of time. The Ngoni created their 'state', that is, their present political and social units, within a relatively short period by a series of deliberate acts. They brought with them a pattern of society from the south; they modified[1] it during their forty odd years of wandering and warfare; and they moulded it finally when they settled in their present areas. Within this deliberately created social structure the principles of centralization and rank were dominant. Based on these two principles the Ngoni set up, in an alien milieu, the institutions of chieftainship,[2] of military training, of systematized law courts, of recognized ranks in society, of patrilineal succession and inheritance, speaking among themselves a language foreign to the country. The resultant society, a compound of the Ngoni ruling aristocracy and the conquered indigenous people, formed the Ngoni state. So conscious was all this social engineering that old men to-day can give detailed accounts of the various processes, political, legal, military, by which the conquerors and conquered were brought under one rule.[3] Borrowing a term from European history,

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[1] One striking modification was the replacing of the village as a small kinship
group by villages of hundreds of huts, with an elaborate organization into hamlets. [621] ●

[2] Using chieftainship in the sense of the Ngoni *inkosi* whose office and powers were very different from those of the surrounding petty chiefs.

[3] As one of these processes, the piercing of the ear-lobes became the 'tribal [304]
[186]

portant chiefs. The Paramounts have told me that occasionally at 814 their biannual 'meeting of chiefs' and *indunas*, some recital of history is made, especially if they want to quote a precedent or examine an old custom with a view to change. This historical tradition therefore is alive and has a recognized function in regulating Ngoni life. In one area part of it has been written in the vernacular and is used as a school history book.[1] In the other areas the Paramounts have spoken of the need for something of the same kind, as they recognize that with the coming of modern education it is an effective way of training the young in the traditions of the Ngoni past.

In addition to recitals of tradition by 'historians' there are many other reminders of the Ngoni past which are constantly before the people. An adequate examination of Ngoni history as it is expressed in their institutions and standardized behaviour would need an article to itself. I shall only mention here some ways and occasions through which tradition and old Ngoni institutions are brought before the people.

1. The praise songs of chiefs, war songs, regimental songs, names [583] of famous regiments, and prayers for rain. These contain references, often rather obscure, to events and persons in the past. The praise songs are sung, or rather shouted, on special occasions, as when thanking the chief for beer, by members of important clans who alone know the words. The war songs and regimental songs recall the great days of conquest, and are sung and danced in war dress at big gatherings at the Paramount's village or at other chief's villages. The [782] prayers for rain invoke the names of great chiefs in old days, but are now only a memory as they are no longer used in ceremonies—at least in none that I have found so far.

2. The names of prominent landmarks, such as hills and rivers [823] where great chiefs built their villages and fights took place. Herd boys will point out a river and say, 'That is where Mtwalo built when he came from Choma', or 'That hill is where Singu hid in the Azungu war'. The historical events attached to these places are widely known and constantly before people's eyes in the diversified landscape of hills and valleys.

3. Important village names. During the trek north, the names of [621]

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[1] In Mwambera's country.

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814 621 the villages of certain chiefs in the south were preserved.[1] In Mwambera's country there are the names of villages belonging to nine generations of Jere chiefs, and in Gomani's country for seven generations of Maseko chiefs. Villages holding these historic names are in charge of an individual of high rank who is never called the 'owner' of that village but 'the one who takes care'. I realized how clear to the people is the historical significance of these village names, when I asked a question and they exclaimed, 'What? You do not know about Elangeni being the village of Hlachwayo? But all Ngoni people can know that.'[2]

814 614 [193] [576] 4. Clan names. The clan names, as the Ngoni say, denote a person's 'tribe' and the respect due to him. With the prefix, *e*, *a*, *ma* (according to the area) the clan name is used as a respectful form of address, and always when thanking for a gift or favour. The tone of reverence with which the great clan names are thus mentioned is itself an indication of the rank and honour of a person.

814 621 5. Village descent. In old days Ngoni villages were very much larger than to-day. The headman of a village on your first visit will always give you the genealogy of his village, how it split off from A, which split off from B, which was the *chigawa* under *induna* X of the big village of chief Y. Reciting these village genealogies generally leads to some recalling of the past, and the village notables, the *amadoda*, gather round to corroborate or correct the headman's recital.

814 It takes very little to stimulate the Ngoni to historical conversations. I have heard them originate in the return of a villager from Johannesburg, where he met Zulu and Swazi men and found they could speak together and had common traditions; in a sermon preached by an Ngoni minister in which he used illustrations from Ngoni warfare; in a rebuke from the Boma to a headman for trying to move his village from worn out land to a site outside the Reserve on an empty farm. And it is not only the aristocrats who take part in such conversations. Sometimes it is evident that men and boys whose [619] fathers had been slaves are anxious to show their knowledge of Ngoni history in order to prove their unity with the true Ngoni.

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[1] I am not clear yet what was the precise sociological process by which the identity of these villages was preserved.

[2] An idiomatic use which has the force of a double negative 'No one cannot know it'.

175 ten units of different orders of segmentation in the old system and are 648 now regarded as ten homologous territorial segments in the new. 631 Thus one village founded for a group of queens by Mpeseni I has given rise to two royal chieftainships, another to one royal chieftainship, and a third to a royal chieftainship and a non-royal one. On the other hand, there is no chieftainship corresponding to the son of Mpeseni I who was next in succession to the main heir.

621 There are royal villages in every county. The oldest royal village 634 in a county is now the capital of the county, and the lieutenants in the capital are responsible to the county chief. The minor chiefs have 178 continued the process of making new villages for their queens, so that in each county the chief lives in a recently *formed* royal village, founded either by himself or by his father, and not in his capital. The capital is often the biggest village in the county, while the chief's village is more *frequently* quite small. It is the name of the capital village rather than that of the chief's village that serves as the name of the county itself. Thus, while in the old days the national capital changed with each new Paramount, the county capitals do not alter. The new royal villages founded since 1898 have not the same importance in the political structure as had the pre-conquest royal villages. This change is reflected in the fact that there is now no real national capital in the old sense.

692 [622] Disputes in the old days were settled in the village by the headman, or were taken to the regional governor, or to the lieutenants of the royal village, for settlement. If the matter could not be settled there it was taken to the assembly of the senior lieutenants of Mpeseni, whose decision could be set aside only by Mpeseni himself. Now each chief has a court, and there is an appeal court on which representatives from each of the ten counties sit in turn. In the old 647 days important decisions were taken by the senior lieutenants, in consultation with Mpeseni, although the four large royal villages were to some extent independent of one another. Sections of the army, for [721] instance, appear to have been sent out on raids from a royal village without reference to the Paramount.[1] Under the present régime [648] meetings of the tribe as a whole are held at Mcumo, a centre established by the Administration at which there is a school and a dispensary. These are attended by the chiefs and such people as choose to come. These meetings are usually sponsored by the Administration, and meetings to discuss affairs that arise independently of the Administration are

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[1] Cf. [illegible], *A Trip to Mpeseni's*, p. 1.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FRS Ngoni FRS
Mpezeni

Royal and Commoner Villages

●621 Nowadays most of the villages in the kingdom are commoner villages, under the charge of headmen. From such evidence as is available, it seems likely that in the pre-conquest period there were fewer villages than there are now, and that they were bigger than are most modern villages.[1] It also appears that the process by which a division of a village broke away to become a separate village was a gradual one, so that at any one time there would have been some doubt in deciding how many distinct villages there were. This is seen at the present time in the histories of what are now distinct villages; the people relate how the first time they made a village of their own it was done only a little distance away from the parent village. Pairs of villages of common origin still tend to occupy sites in comparative proximity to one another, and may arrange their moves from one area to another, in search for new garden land, simultaneously.

In general, however, there is little difficulty in observing the village as a discrete spatial residential group. We may distinguish five types of village,[2] according to the status of the person in charge of the
[622] village. The capital villages and chiefs' villages have already been mentioned. Intermediate between these two categories are the regal villages. These have been formed from older royal villages to accommodate a group of wives of a chief or other member of the royal lineage, but do not now have a chief living in them. All these three kinds of royal village, capital, regal, and chief's, are controlled in the same way, by lieutenants appointed to the task in the first instance by a member of the royal family. There is another kind of village which I shall call a cadet village. The junior members of the royal lineage, that is, younger sons and sons by unimportant wives, did not have sufficient following to carry on this process of forming large new villages and merely lived with their wives in their natal villages or founded small villages of their own. Such villages are now similar in form to com-
[622] moner villages, except that the headman of the village belongs to the royal lineage. All other villages we may class as commoner villages.

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[1] 'The Angoni villages are about five times the size of an average Achewa village . . .' ([illegible], p. 5). Cf. Read, *Tradition and Prestige*, p. 47.

[2] All types are known in the vernacular by the same descriptive term, *muzi*, and there are no classificatory terms. It is possible to tell whether a village is royal or commoner by its name. A village with a male personal name is a commoner or cadet village. A village with a female personal name, or a descriptive name in the Ngoni language, is a royal village.

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TABLE 1. *Village Types*

Type of village		*Senior resident*
Royal	Capital	First Lieutenant
	Royal	First Lieutenant
	Chief's	Chief
Cadet		Royal Headman
Commoner		Commoner Headman

This process of village formation may be illustrated from Mpezeni's 621
own country. The capital of the county is the village founded by
Mpezeni I for his chief wife and one or two other wives. His heir Singu
was born in this village, and when he married he founded two villages
of his own which are now royal villages. In the senior of these two
Mpezeni II was born, and in about 1915 he founded a new village
which is still the chief's village of the county. There are other royal
villages in the county founded in a similar manner.

This formation of royal villages would, other things being equal, 161
lead to a dispersal of the population. It seems, however, that the 621
major factor in dispersing the population since 1898 has been the
formation of independent commoner villages. Many of these villages
have histories that go back to the foundation of the village as an independent unit immediately after 1898, and it seems likely that the
unsettled conditions of those days and the burning of villages did
much to bring about the breakdown of the old system in which the
royal villages were more important than they are today.

The royal villages are more closely connected with the chieftain- 628
ships than are the commoner villages, and the chiefs visit in them
more frequently than in other villages. A dispute in a royal village is
usually settled by a meeting in the village itself attended by the local [627]
chief, whereas in the case of an ordinary village dispute the matter
would be taken to the chief for him to settle in his own village or
court. A chief may be called to a royal village to drink beer. The royal 422
herds of cattle are kept in the royal villages, and the chiefs look to the 231
first lieutenants of their royal villages for the well-being of the royal 643
cattle as well as of the inhabitants of the royal villages. All the cattle
in the country are held to belong in one sense to the Paramount Chief
himself,[1] but in as far as the cattle held by most people are concerned,
there is no more to this statement than in the parallel expression that

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[1] Cf. Cunnison, p. 29.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959

FRS Ngoni FRS

Mpezeni

422 231 643 Mpezeni is the owner of the land, or of the world. The cattle kept in the royal villages are held to have belonged formerly to Mpezeni I or to Zwangendaba, and therefore still belong to the Paramount Chief. Chiefs and other members of the royal lineage who have cattle inherited in this way, in fact dispose of them as they please when the Paramount Chief is not in their village, but if he appears and a beast is killed in his honour, it is the Paramount who is praised as the owner of the beast and not the local owner. In the capital and chief's villages the lieutenants are more under the control of the chief of the county, who may intervene to depose a lieutenant if he thinks that his cattle are not being well looked after.

622 ●621 648 The Administration does not distinguish between one type of village and another, and gives the same title of headman[1] to the man in charge of the village, whoever he may be. It tends to act on the assumption that all headmen are of equal status and have the same amount of authority in their villages. Combined with the decline in the power of the royal lineage, this policy may lead to the assimilation of the different types of village to a common form.

II. THE VILLAGE

Material Setting

961 Ngoni villages, which form the principal units of administration in the country, contain from half a dozen to 120 huts. It is seldom more than a quarter of a mile from one edge of a village to the other. There is a rough arrangement of huts into parallel lines, with the doors all facing the same way at right-angles to the direction of the [343] lines. Kitchen huts, which are similar in appearance to dwelling huts, are included in these lines, while in front of a line of dwellings may be a line of storehouses and sties for small stock. On the edge of the [417] village are the cattle byres. There are seldom any fences marking off courtyards within the village, so that it is possible to sit on the veranda of a hut and look along at all the other verandas. If there are well-established divisions within the village, the boundaries of the divisions may be indicated by lines of aloes.

592 Most people, except polygynists and some children, may be said to live in one hut, in which they keep most of their belongings and where they usually sleep. A single hut may be occupied by up to about ten

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[1] Usually *induna*, pl. [illegible]; otherwise [illegible], pl. [illegible]. The specific term for headman of a cadet or commoner village is [illegible].

children, but it is unusual to find more than two adults living in the 592
same hut. These may be either man and wife, or two women who are unmarried or whose husbands are away. Adolescent boys sleep in dormitories containing a number of boys, and there are similar huts for [882]
girls. Smaller children sleep with whoever is responsible for their upbringing, parents, grandparents, or other relative, as the case may be. Children in fact sleep in a variety of huts, sometimes with their [858]
elders and sometimes with one group of playmates, sometimes with another. Polygynists divide their time between their several wives, [595]
although they may tend to keep their belongings in the hut of their chief wife. Men do not as a rule possess huts of their own apart from those of their wives. 423

The hut is said to belong to the man or woman living in it. There 342
is a tendency to refer to the man as the owner if the marriage is patrilocal and to the woman if it is matrilocal, but this is not an invariable rule, and the builder of the hut, who may be living elsewhere, may be referred to as the owner. About half the dwelling huts have kitchens [343]
near by, separate huts of similar construction which are used for cooking and as sleeping-places for children and visitors. When there is no [252]
separate kitchen, cooking is done inside the dwelling hut or on the veranda.

The village, then, is a collection of buildings of different types, in 621 ●
which people sleep and keep their possessions, animals are sheltered, and food stored. We must now consider how the inhabitants of the village are organized.

Structure

Royal villages have names in the Ngoni language that were given 621
by their founders. For example, there is a regal village founded 103
by Singu, the eldest son of Mpezeni I, called Ngalaweni, meaning 'dormitory', as it was there that he put his wives. These villages are also sometimes referred to by the name of the senior queen for whom they were founded.

Most commoner villages, however, do not possess names of this 621
type, and are known only by descent-names or by the names of in- 622
dividuals. These are usually the name and descent-name of the founder [103]
of the village, the man who first established the village as a separate unit. It is this individual name that is used to refer to the present headman of the village, the man recognized by the chief and the Administration as responsible for the village. This office is hereditary,

621 usually in the male line, and, other things being equal, it is the eldest
622 son of the chief wife who succeeds his father. However, if the heir is a minor, the job of running the village may be undertaken by a brother of the deceased or by the first lieutenant of the village, and in this case difficulties may be placed in the way of the rightful heir should he claim his heritage on maturity. The usurper or his successors may take the name of the founder of the village as though there had been no break in the succession. There is among the Ngoni little of the
551 importance attached to the inheritance of names that is reported from other tribes of the region. Anyone may use the name of any of his patrilineal ancestors, so that, for example, most of the members of the royal lineage, men and women, use the name of Mpezeni on formal occasions in addition to their other personal names.

To assist him in his work a headman may nominate a deputy, and
624 there may be in the village one or more lieutenants. The office of lieutenant in a large and prosperous village tends to be hereditary, but if there is no suitable successor the headman may appoint a man from another family to succeed. Many headmen have no deputy and some have no lieutenants.

In pre-conquest times the small residential group appears to have
621 consisted of the men of an effective minimal patrilineage,[1] their wives,
582 and the families of their prisoners of war. With the passage of time
178 some of the senior captives became lieutenants of the head of the lineage and there was intermarriage between the aristocratic lineage and the captured families as well as between one captured family and another. This process of intermarriage has continued and I found, in every village I examined in the Northern Rhodesia counties, that each person is related to everyone else in the village, affinally and cognatically, in at least one way, while many people are related to each other by a number of different paths. In the Nyasaland counties this process of affinal assimilation has not been going on for so long, and here I encountered families of former captives who have not yet been linked by marriage to the family of their aristocratic captors.

Movement

361 A village is likely to stay in the same place for a dozen years or so.
166 During this time some of the huts will have fallen down and have been

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[1] Fortes, *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 192: '. . . the effective minimal lineage, that is, the lineage of smallest span which emerges as a corporate unit in economic, jural, and ritual activities and is differentiated from other units of a like sort.'

361 Huts sometimes become infested with ticks, or the site itself may prove to be intolerably damp. New huts are then built a short distance away or even contiguously to the old site, and no new gardens are made apart from those made among the deserted huts.

Internal Segmentation of the Village

361 ●621 We have already seen that the divisions within the village are embryonic new villages. These divisions are most formally indicated in the Nyasaland counties, where there are large villages divided into a distinct number of divisions, with the spatial boundaries between the divisions indicated by a greater interval between the huts, and with each division named and under the charge of a lieutenant or of a patrilineal kinsman of the headman. On the Rhodesian side, however, it is more usual to find that certain small clusters of huts within a village are regarded as being the division of such-and-such a person living in one of them. The bulk of the huts in the village do not belong to any particular cluster but merely to the village as a whole. These clusters do not have any name apart from that of their senior inhabitant, whose close relatives occupy the huts of the cluster. The leader of a cluster may be a lieutenant of the headman or merely some important person with a comparatively large body of dependants. Such clusters, which are often on the periphery of the village, sometimes originate from the grouping together by a polygynist of the huts of his various wives, and grow as their children marry and live alongside their parents. Another mechanism for the formation of clusters is that [166] of immigration into the village at about the same time by a number of persons related to each other more closely than to the other inhabitants of the village, as, for example, on the break-up of some other village. The immigrants tend to build together if there is room. In this case the leader of the cluster may have little standing in the village. The boundaries of clusters are not always plainly indicated, while a man who is ambitious to make his own village may as a first step try to increase the clarity with which his cluster is defined spatially.

Land Utilization

311 241 We may divide gardens into three types: main, old village, and moist. The moist gardens are made near streams, and are fenced to keep out cattle. Tomatoes, cabbages, onions, and other vegetables are grown, and maize is planted during the hot season so that it can be harvested in December or January. These gardens are cultivated only by the

It is therefore appropriate that, when a man has proved himself to be a good son-in-law by fulfilling his obligations to his parents-in-law and by treating their daughter well, he is invited to make a formal entry into the house of his wife's parents. This is the occasion for much dancing and speech-making. The salient features of the ceremony[1] are as follows. The married couple come in procession with their relatives and neighbours from their village to the village of the woman's parents. The procession is led by the eldest child of the couple carrying a knobkerry. They dance in the cattle byre and then enter the hut of the woman's parents. Here after some drinking and dancing, during which the visitors keep themselves more or less to one side of the hut and leave the other side for the relatives of the woman, there is a ceremony in which a gift is offered by the man's people to the woman's people, and in which a female relative of the man takes a spoonful of boiled maize from a dish and then spits it out again. She is followed by a female relative of the woman, who does the same. The two people who do this are close relatives of the couple, sometimes sisters. The knobkerry stays in the hut overnight, and the next day the man's parents come and they formally enter the woman's parents' hut. The couple also come into the hut with their friends and the woman's mother offers beer to the man in the usual way by kneeling at his feet and drinking to him. He then drinks from the bowl, and it is passed round for everyone in the hut to drink. 606 527

The completion of this ceremony marks the setting aside of the avoidance taboos to the greatest extent allowed. The man may still not sit on the same mat as his mother-in-law but he can now talk to her and can come into her hut. It is, as it were, the final reward of the good son-in-law and marks the end of the series of adjustments in relative status that began with the small gifts that the man made before the legalization payment was fixed. The hostility between the two families has been reduced by carrying out through the years their reciprocal rights and duties, and their common interest in the children of the marriage is symbolized by the eldest child who leads the procession from one village to the other.

Even on such a family occasion as this, village, as distinct from kinship, ties remain important. At one ceremony I attended the leader of the first delegation from the man's village was described as being just an important woman in the village and not related to him. [621]

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[1] *Mngenio.* Cf. the Zulu verb *uku-ngenisa*, to enter another person's house (Colenso).

/4 cont'd/

701 national basis to include all the adolescent males in the tribe, whatever their origin. Women were grouped into corresponding regiments.
182 This system broke down after the first World War, when so many young men went away in the fighting. To-day the great exodus
167 is not to war but to work, to the mines of Southern Rhodesia and elsewhere, and the incidence of labour migration is so high
[162] that it is not unknown to find a village in which there is no adult male resident. Part of the exodus is seasonal, and many men and
241 women, as well as children, find employment on the tobacco farms
464 of the district and in Fort Jameson Township.

II

241 The staple crop is maize, of which enough is grown to pro-
432 vide in good years for a small surplus for sale to the tobacco farms and the Administration. Tobacco is not grown by Africans for sale, except within the villages, but vegetables and a little rice and finger millet are sold to Europeans.
231 Cattle are kept in the fly-free areas, and play an important but diminishing part in social life as
[583] the means of paying bridewealth, but the sale of cattle is not at present a regular affair. Their principal use is as a form of capital
[581] investment that can be called up to meet damages and fines awarded by the Courts.

161 The population of the tribe is about 60,000, the majority liv-
131 ing in the Ngoni and Msandile Reserves, both near to Fort /5/ Jameson. The remainder live on the tobacco farms or in Fort Jameson Township.
621 Villages vary in size from settlements of three or four huts to large clusters containing up to 500 people. The average size of a village is about thirty huts with a population of 100.

The Ngoni conquerors reckoned descent in the male line,
611 while most of the people whom they conquered and with whom they married traced descent through the mother. To-day for practical
[618] purposes, descent is omnilateral, in that any connection through a male or female ancestor can be made use of as the occasion demands.

129 628 when the death penalty can hardly be exacted, or compensation made in the delivery over of slaves, they find it hard to satisfy demands and make a show of justice.

591 [621] Now let us speak of the social life of the people. The Ngoni differ from most of the Central Africa tribes in their habit of living in large unprotected villages. The tendency of most of the other tribes is to scatter themselves in very little hamlets over a wide area with scarcely a path of communication between the villages. Where war has harassed them they have built huge stockaded villages for their mutual protection, but as soon as assured peace has come again, the towns have split into numerous distant groups of houses. This seems to be caused by the dread and mistrust of one another which the people have through their superstitious belief in an evil eye, and in witchcraft, and through the perpetual little quarrels that arise. A carrier who was accompanying a friend of mine described this state very well when they passed a little village of four huts, and then a few hundred yards farther on an isolated hut. Holding up his hand he cried, "Look at Mr. Thumb saying to Messrs. Fourfingers, keep your distance."

361 [692] [574] [535] [342] ● 621 591 The heart of a Ngoni village is the large circular cattle kraal. There all the court cases are tried, there the visitors are received, and there the dances are held. Round the kraal the village of beehive huts is built in regular rows, and then immediately outside the gardens begin. The village life takes the place of family life, and the headman is father of all the people. The boys after they have attained to twelve years of age or so live in huts by themselves and the girls in huts on the opposite side of the village. These girls' quarters used to be most sacredly guarded, and any man found in their enclosure after dark could be killed.

569 [571] [62] The great part of the Ngoni nation consists of domestic slaves. They are people, or the descendants of people, who have been captured in raiding expeditions. But their position is not a hard one. If they are discontented they may change masters. They give their masters a little free labour, and in return are made members of his family; he espouses all their quarrels, looks after them in sickness, and shares some of his superfluity with them, but they love to share some of their necessities with him.

595 Polygamy was the universal custom of the people until recently. Now hundreds of polygamous unions are being dissolved every year. But in the rougher days polygamy was a necessary